

THE SCHOLAR'S LIBRARY

General Editor :—GUY BOAS, M.A.

Part I. B.Sc. Prelim.

the Scholar's Library B. App. Pass

General Editor: Guy Boas, M.A. In B.Sc. C3

C. D. College

Anantapur

Modern English Prose

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

SECOND SERIES

THE SCHOLAR'S LIBRARY

Complete Texts

- ESSAYS IN CRITICISM
SECOND SERIES. By
MATTHEW ARNOLD
- NORTHANGER ABBEY By
JANE AUSTEN
- A TALE OF TWO CITIES By
CHARLES DICKENS
- SYBIL By BENJAMIN DISRAELI
- FAR FROM THE MADDING
CROWD. By THOMAS HARDY.
- THE MAYOR OF CASTER-
BRIDGE By THOMAS HARDY
- THE RETURN OF THE
NATIVE By THOMAS HARDY.
- THE TRUMPET-MAJOR By
THOMAS HARDY
- UNDER THE GREENWOOD
TREE By THOMAS HARDY
- THE WOODLANDERS By
THOMAS HARDY
- EOTHEN By A W KINGLAKE
- PARADISE LOST Books I and
II By JOHN MILTON.
- PARADISE LOST Books IX
and X By JOHN MILTON
- SHORTER POEMS OF JOHN
MILTON
- KIDNAPPED. By ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON.
- TREASURE ISLAND By
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.
- GULLIVER'S TRAVELS The
First Three Voyages. By
JONATHAN SWIFT

Selections

- AMERICAN ONE ACT PLAYS
AMERICAN PROSE.
- DR. JOHNSON A SELFCTION
FROM BOSWELL'S BIOGRAPHY.
- EIGHT ESSAYISTS
- FACT AND FICTION AN AN-
THOLOGY.
- GREECE AND ROME A
SELECTION FROM THE WORKS
OF SIR JAMES GEORGE FRAZER
- STORIES AND POEMS OF
THOMAS HARDY

- THE ILIAD AND THE
ODYSSEY Extracts from the
Translations by LANG, LEAF
and MYERS, and BUTCHER and
LANG
- MODERN ENGLISH PROSE.
FIRST SERIES
- MODERN ENGLISH PROSE.
SECOND SERIES
- MODERN ESSAYS IN CRITI-
CISM
- MODERN POETRY, 1922-1934
AN ANTHOLOGY
- MODERN SHORT STORIES
- ONE-ACT PLAYS Edited by
N B MCKELLAR.
- THE DIARY OF SAMUEL
PEPYS. SELECTIONS
- POEMS FOR YOUTH
- POEMS OLD AND NEW AN
ANTHOLOGY
- MORE POEMS OLD AND
NEW AN ANTHOLOGY
- LONGER POEMS OLD AND
NEW AN ANTHOLOGY
- POEMS OF TWENTY YEARS.
AN ANTHOLOGY, 1918-1938
- PROSE OF YESTERDAY
DICKENS TO GALSWORDTHY.
- A "PUNCH" ANTHOLOGY.
- AN ANTHOLOGY OF WIT.
- QUEST AND CONQUEST. AN
ANTHOLOGY OF PERSONAL AD-
VENTURES.
- READINGS FROM THE
SCIENTISTS
- SHORT HISTORICAL PLAYS
By Modern Authors
- SHORT MODERN PLAYS
FIRST SERIES
- SHORT MODERN PLAYS
SECOND SERIES.
- ENGLISH LIFE IN THE EIGHT-
EENTH CENTURY. A
PROSE ANTHOLOGY
- "THE TIMES": AN ANTHOLOGY
- THE AENEID OF VIRGIL
Translated by JOHN DRYDEN
Selections
- SELECTIONS FROM THE
LETTERS OF HORACE
WALPOLE.
- SHORT STORIES BY OSCAR
WILDE

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

SECOND SERIES

Selected and Edited by

GUY BOAS, M.A.

*Headmaster of Sloane School, formerly
Senior English Master, St. Paul's School*

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1940

COPYRIGHT

First Edition 1938

Reprinted 1940

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

BY R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, EDINBURGH

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE compiler wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the following, who have kindly given permission for the use of the copyright material contained in this volume : the Representatives of the late Lord Birkenhead, and Messrs Cassell & Co., Ltd., for " Sir Walter Scott," from *Speeches of Lord Birkenhead* ; Mr. Robert Byron for " Moscow," from *First Russia, Then Tibet* ; Messrs. Chatto & Windus, for " The Président de Brosses," from *Portraits in Miniature*, by Lytton Strachey ; the Rt. Hon Winston Churchill and Messrs. Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., for " Lawrence of Arabia," from *Great Contemporaries* ; Mr. Frank Debenham and Messrs Ernest Benn, Ltd, for " Penguins," from *The Polar Regions* ; Mr. Martin Gilkes and Messrs. Blackie & Son, Ltd, for " A Modern Ballad," from *Introduction to Modern Poetry* ; Sir Henry Hadow and Messrs. Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., for " Characteristics of Wagner's Music," from *Richard Wagner* ; Mr. A. P. Herbert and the Proprietors of *Punch*, for " On the Mystical Nature of the Passport " ; Mr. James Hilton, for " The High Lama," from *Lost Horizon* ; Mr. Aldous Huxley and Messrs. Chatto & Windus, for " The Country," from *Rotunda* ; Mr. Cecil Lewis and Messrs. Peter Davies, Ltd., for " Birth of a Cloud," from *Sagittarius Rising* ; Mr. Eric Linklater and Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., for " A Gangster's Funeral," from *Juan in America* ; Mr. A. G. Macdonell, for " A Motor Drive in the U.S.A.," from *A Visit to America* ; Mr. W. Somerset Maugham and Messrs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

William Heinemann, Ltd., for "The Verger," from *Cosmopolitans*; Mr. Charles Morgan, for "The Tunnel," from *The Fountain*; The Mount Everest Committee and the Editor of *The Times*, for "Men and the Mountain"; Mr. Frank O'Connor, for "Orpheus and His Lute," from *Bones of Contention*; Mr. Stanley Phillips and Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., for "New Ways of Collecting Stamps," from *Stamp Collecting*; Mr. J. B. Priestley and Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd., for "Greater London," from *They Walk in the City*; Mr. V. S. Pritchett, for "At a Spanish Parador," from *Marching Spain*; the Proprietors of *Punch*, for "Example of Modern Science," by Miss E. M. Delafield; Lord Tweedsmuir and Messrs. Peter Davies, Ltd., for "Caesar's Death," from *Julius Caesar*; and Dr. Esmé Wingfield-Stratford and Messrs. George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., for "Einstein," from *The Harvest of Victory*.

FOREWORD

It is only five years since I made my first selection called *Modern English Prose*. The popularity which that volume has been fortunate enough to enjoy has encouraged me to make a further selection, not because the authors included in the original volume have gone out of date, but because so much good prose is written nowadays by English writers that there seems to be every justification for a second book.

I have said all I have to say on the subject of modern prose in my Introduction to Volume I; there is therefore no need to repeat it here. Those who have already studied the first book will know what I have said already, and those who have not, and who like this one, will, I hope, procure its predecessor, not for the sake of my Introduction, but for the abundance of good reading which the authors contained in it provide.

G. B.

CONTENTS

TRAVEL

			PAGE
Birth of a Cloud	<i>Sagittarius Rising</i>	Cecil Lewis	3
Men and the Mountain	<i>The Times</i>	Anonymous	7
The Country	<i>Rotunda</i>	Aldous Huxley	25
A Motor Drive in the U.S.A.	<i>A Visit to America</i>	A. G. Macdonell	32
Moscow	<i>First Russia, Then Tibet</i>	Robert Byron	43
At a Spanish Parador	<i>Marching Spain</i>	V. S. Pritchett	48
On the Mystical Nature of the Passport	<i>Punch</i>	A. P. Herbert	55

FICTION

The Verger	<i>Cosmopolitans</i>	W. Somerset Maugham	63
The High Lama	<i>Lost Horizon</i>	James Hilton	72
Orpheus and His Lute	<i>Bones of Contention</i>	Frank O'Connor	82
Greater London	<i>They Walk in the City</i>	J. B. Priestley	95
A Gangster's Funeral	<i>Juan in America</i>	Eric Linklater	98

CONTENTS

			PAGE
The Tunnel	<i>The Fountain</i>	Charles Morgan	109
Example of Modern Science	<i>Punch</i>	E. M. Delafield	128

ESSAYS AND STUDIES

‘A Modern Ballad	<i>Introduction to Modern Poetry</i>	Martin Gilkes	133
‘Caesar’s Death	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	John Buchan	141
New Ways of Collecting Stamps	<i>Stamp Collecting</i>	Stanley Phillips	144
Penguins	<i>The Polar Regions</i>	Frank Debenham	155
Sir Walter Scott	<i>Speeches of Lord Birkenhead</i>	Lord Birkenhead	162
‘Characteristics of Wagner’s Music	<i>Richard Wagner</i>	Sir Henry Hadow	179
The Président de Brosses	<i>Portraits in Miniature</i>	Lytton Strachey	183
Lawrence of Arabia	<i>Great Contempo- raries</i>	Winston Churchill	193
Einstein	<i>The Harvest of Victory</i>	Esmé Wingfield- Stratford	197
Notes			203
Essay Questions			231

TRAVEL

BIRTH OF A CLOUD

MAGNIFICENT days of blue and crystal, when to be in the air made everything worth while, were over Damp hangars, muddy roads, cold quarters, clouds and rain—these were to be our lot from now on.

One dreary grey morning I went up alone on patrol. The clouds were at two hundred feet, but they might break farther east over the lines. I rose into the cloud-bank—a featureless obscurity, a white dark, as you might say—and started climbing.

A pilot flies by his horizon. He keeps his machine on an even keel, or indeed in any position, by reference to it. Take away the horizon and he doesn't know where he is. This is the reason for gyroscopic controls, false horizon indicators, and all the modern gadgets (to say nothing of beam wireless) which enable a man to fly "blind," and a commercial pilot to bring his thirty-eight passengers on to Croydon aerodrome in a pea-soup fog without too much anxiety. But in 1916 a chap had an air-speed indicator and a lateral bubble (which was supposed to tell him if he was on an even keel), and the rest was the luck of the game and his native " nous."

In a cloud there is no horizon, nothing above, below, in front, behind, but thick white mist. It's apt to make you panic after a while, and many a man has fallen out of the clouds in a spin through losing his head and, without knowing it, standing his machine on its ear. Usually low cloud-banks

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

aren't so very deep, so if you go carefully and watch the controls closely you get up through them all right ; but on this particular morning there seemed to be no top to them. I climbed and climbed, looking up all the time, hoping to see that thinning of the mist and the halo of the sun above which means you're almost through. But it wasn't until I reached two-thousand feet that I saw the welcome sheen of gold overhead. It thinned. Mist wraiths drew back and showed blue. They curled away. I was out.

But what in heaven had happened to this cloud-bank? It wasn't level. It was tilted as steeply as the side of a house. The machine was all right—air speed constant, bubble central—and yet here were the clouds defying all natural laws ! I suppose it took me a second to realise that *I* was tilted, bubble or no bubble, that I had been flying for the best part of fifteen minutes at an angle of thirty degrees to the horizon—and *had never noticed it !* If I had tried to fly this way on purpose, it would have seemed impossible, at the best most unpleasant. The machine would have shuddered and slipped. I should have been in a dither after half a minute. If you'd told me anyone could fly like it quite happily for ten minutes, I should just have laughed. It shows what a little ignorance can do.

I put the machine level and gazed around in wonder. Here it was still summer. Below, life was dying back into the earth. Gold plumes fluttering from the poplars. The mournful voice of the October wind. But here ! As far as the eye could reach to the four horizons, a level plain of radiant whiteness, sparkling in the sun. The light seemed not to come from a single source, but to pervade and permeate every atom of air—a dazzling, perfect, empty basin of blue.

BIRTH OF A CLOUD

A hundred miles, north, south, east, west. Thirty thousand square miles of unbroken cloud-plains ! No traveller in the desert, no pioneer to the poles had ever seen such an expanse of sand or snow. Only the lonely threshers of the sky, hidden from the earth, had gazed on it. Only we who went up into the high places under the shadow of wings !

I sailed on for a time, alone in the wonderful skies, as happy as I have ever been or ever shall be, I suppose, in this life, looking lazily for some rift in the white floor ; but there was none. It was complete, unbroken, absolute. I was about to turn west again when I saw, in the distance, a cloud floating above the floor, small, no bigger than a man's hand ; but even as I looked, it seemed to grow. It swelled, budded, massed, and I realised I was watching the very birth of a cloud—the cumulus cloud that chiefly makes the glory of the sky, the castles, battlements, cathedrals of the heavens. What laws had governed its birth at that moment, at that place, amid the long savannahs of the blue ? Heaven, that bore it, knew. Still it was there, creating a growing loveliness out of nothing ! a marriage of light and water, fostered by the sun, nourished by the sky !

I turned towards it, fascinated. It grew rapidly. Soon it was vast, towering, magnificent, its edges sharp, seemingly solid, though constantly swelling and changing. And it was alive with light. Radiant white, satin soft, and again gold, rose-tinted, shadowed and graded into blue and mauve shadows—and orient pearl in the oyster shell of heaven ! And all the time I knew that I had but to come close enough for all the illusion to be gone, the solidity and beauty to dissolve, the edges to fray and dull, and that within it would be the same grey mist that you may meet on any moor in England.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Wisdom said : Keep distance and admire. Curiosity asked : How much closer without losing the illusion ? I edged nearer. I was utterly alone in the sky, yet suddenly, against the wall of the cloud, I saw another machine. It was so close that instinctively, as an instantaneous reaction to the threat of collision, I yanked the stick and reeled away, my heart in my mouth. A second later, I looked round and laughed. There was nothing there ! It was my own shadow I had seen, the silhouette of the machine on the white cheek of the cloud. I came back to observe the strange and rare phenomenon. There on the cloud was my shadow, dark, clean-cut, but more than the shadow, for around it was a bright halo of light, and outside that a perfect circular rainbow, and outside that again another rainbow, fainter, reversed.

From the ground the rainbow is an arch spanning the visible heaven. From the next hill-top, so it seems, one would be high enough to solve the riddle of where it ends. But here it was small, bright, compact, a perfect circle, and at the centre the shadow of the Parasol, like the stamped image on a golden coin.

I shut off, turned east, and came down. The white floor, several thousand feet below, rose up towards me, turned at last from a pavement of pearl to just a plain bank of fog. I plunged into it. I might be going back from paradise to purgatory, so grey and cold and comfortless it was. And as I sank through it, listening to the singing of the wires, I was thinking how some day men might no longer hug the earth, but dwell in heaven, draw power and sustenance from the skies, whirl at their will among the stars, and only seek the ground as men go down to the dark mysteries of the sea-floor, glad to return, sun-worshippers, up to the stainless heaven.

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

The melancholy landscape of stubble fields and bare trees appeared. I picked up a road, got my bearings, and swept off home at a hundred feet

"Did you see anything?" said another pilot, strolling up to the machine.

"Nothing. It's completely dud."

CECIL LEWIS

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

EVEREST has been described as man's supreme adventure in the material world. What is it apart from its symbolism? Simply the top wave of an ocean wall of eruptive rock which, in a dimly distant epoch, reared itself above the tormented continent and cooled into the colossal serrated range stretching for 1500 miles from the Karakoram to the Brahmaputra. It has been assumed that a succession of convulsions, in successive geological periods, added to the height of this already formidable barrier, while the cooling and contracting progressed, by thrusting upward the entire Tibetan tableland into a vast protuberance upon the earth's surface, to the greater glory of the peaks. The mean height of this Tibetan tableland is little inferior to that of most of its watersheds. The loftiest Himalayan masses soar in labyrinthine and almost unbroken formation above the North Indian Plain and the basin of the Ganges.

In this aristocracy summits of from 20,000 to 24,000 ft. are only middle-class There are dozens greater Many have been viewed only from afar. Nanda Devi, within its unique ring of sentinels in Kumaon, has already surrendered its 25,660 ft. to Tilman and Odell Smythe and Shipton (with Holdsworth) have already planted their standard on top of Mount Kamet's 25,447 ft. and have thus

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

like Douglas Freshfield warmed to the prospect of Himalayan victories. But they lived too soon. It was towards the close of last century that Brigadier-General C. G. Bruce and Sir Francis Younghusband first turned over in their minds the preliminary difficulties and planned to meet them. These difficulties centred in the traditional isolationist policies of Nepal and Tibet, on whose frontiers Everest stands. Prospects took favourable shape in 1920, when Sir Charles Bell, then British Political Agent in Sikkim and a personal friend of the Dalai Lama, was sent on a mission to Lhasa. There, in the autocratic ruler's palace outside the holy city, a "western" map of the hills was for the first time produced and the strange occidental scheme unfolded. And there, some days later, his Holiness graciously gave his consent and with it a small brown scroll—a kind of *laissez-passer* to that bird-country-of-the-south.

The first expedition, that of 1921, was restricted to reconnaissance. Its work was pure pioneering. It revealed in fullest stature the genius of Leigh-Mallory as an explorer and writer. It should be remembered that until the approach of those first "everesters" of 1921 under Howard-Bury the mountain was nothing more than a triangulated peak on a still primitive map. No stranger had been within 50 miles; even the approaches were untried. Many weeks of reconnoitring—arduous but magnificently romantic to the experimenters—proved how forbidding were its defences—a southern face grimly guarded by great precipices, eastern and western flanks barred by hanging glaciers. Thorough inspection made clear that the ridges beneath the north-west *arête* should be selected as a line of attack only as a last resort. One mysterious col after another was climbed; all seemed to lead to hopeless glaciers or equally hopeless precipices. Trying the eastern approaches from a new

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

base at Khartia (where they were caught in the monsoon) they found themselves confused and confounded on every attempted height by a maze of buttresses, snowfields, and chasms.

Leigh-Mallory, with Bullock supporting him, worked like five Trojans : shouldering through the mists ; boring inward against winds of unmitigated fury ; retreating only to sidestep and thrust forward again elsewhere ; nosing in and out of the possible re-entrants like a terrier among the warrens. His written record of these trail-blazings is a classic of mountaineering science. It established for all time the picture of the mountain as a structural whole. It is unlikely that his glowing descriptions, written at the day's end with thews and sinews exhausted, will ever be surpassed. —

“ . . . the clouds were dark in that direction. We gazed at them intently through field-glasses as though by some miracle we might pierce the veil. Presently the miracle happened. We caught the gleam of snow behind the grey mists. A whole group of mountains began to appear in gigantic fragments. Mountain shapes are often fantastic seen through a mist ; these were like the wildest creation of a dream. A preposterous triangular lump rose out of the depths ; its edge came leaping up at an angle of about 70 deg and ended nowhere. To the left a black serrated crest was hanging in the sky incredibly. Gradually, very gradually, we saw the great mountain sides and glaciers and arêtes, now one fragment and now another through the floating rifts, until far higher in the sky than imagination had dared to suggest the white summit of Everest appeared.”

It is one of a hundred vivid pictures, each more intimate than those before, as befits a real reconnaissance. To what conclusions did they lead ? On

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

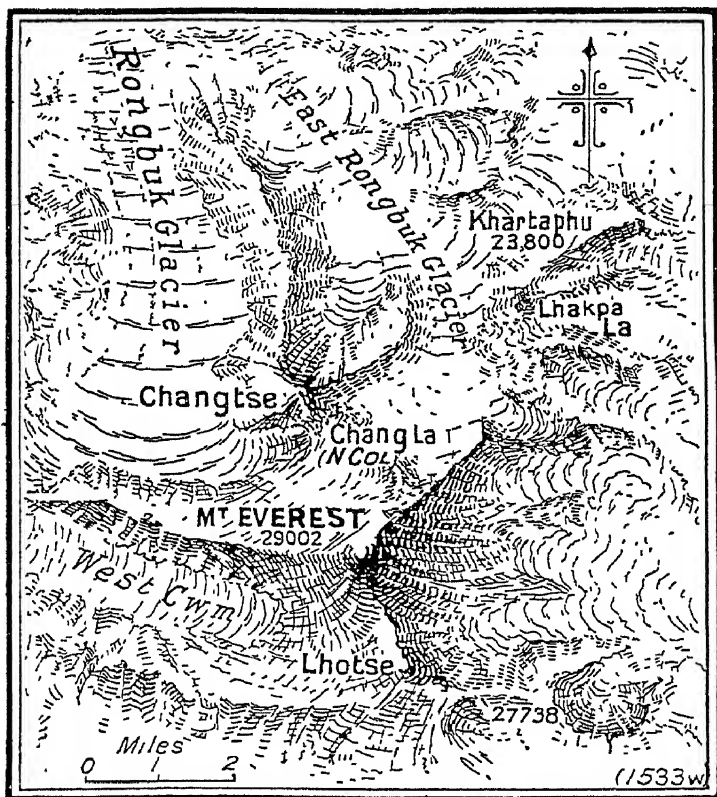
October 10, 1921, a dispatch to *The Times*, carried by a runner to Phari Dzong, announced that a route towards the summit by Chang La and the north-eastern *arête* had been found practicable. Six members of the expedition, with 26 coolies, had encamped at 22,500 ft., and two days later, from a yet higher encampment, Leigh-Mallory, Bullock, and Wheeler had ascended Chang La—the col connecting the main peak with the northern peak. At 23,000 ft. they had halted to take stock of the formidable ground ahead, and had then been driven back by a furious gale whose sting was sharper than the sword's and which rendered all further climbing impossible. Chang La was to become renowned as the North Col; and it is by a route along the leeside of this saddle that all subsequent assaults upon Mount Everest have been made.

The first Everest "reconnaissance" of 1921 led without impediment to the actual "assault" of 1922. To the question, can Everest be climbed? the reconnoitring party, with a summer's gruelling work behind them, had answered with an extremely cautious affirmative and had even estimated the prospect of success for any given team in a given year as 50 to 1 against. But the great experiment went forward. General Bruce, a mountaineer with thirty years' service in a Gurkha regiment to his credit, took command. So keen was the support given him that 13 Europeans and 60 subordinate hill-people, Nepalese and Tibetans, made up the cavalcade which, on May 1, 1922, arrived at Rongbuk with 20 ponies and 300 baggage animals, to say nothing of local camp followers more curious than helpful. It was a uniquely large population for so bare a solitude.

Higher camps had to be formed, fed, and replenished; and fuel, grain, and other supplies had to be collected in a continuous flow from villages

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

40 miles distant. Brief reference to the distances between the camps established on the mountain's flanks and shoulders will help to visualise the expedition's next activities. From the base in Rongbuk



Valley, Camp I was carried up to 17,800 ft., a three hours' journey over a waste of stones. Camp II stood at 19,800 ft., a further four hours up the glacier, in a realm of fantastic *séracs*, ice pinnacles gleaming white against a background of red rock. Camp III

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

stood on moraine below the North Col at a height of 21,000 ft., an eleven hours' journey from the base.

Above this, cutting their steps up the riven battlements of the Col in a swirl of snow, Morshead, Norton, and Leigh-Mallory (with Strutt) established Camp IV at 23,000 ft.; and on May 20th these three, now joined by Somervell, started to negotiate the northern ridge on their first assault upon the summit. The devastating wind of Tibet was all about them. Streaming white mists and sombre blue clouds served as omens of the coming monsoon. They struggled for breath and leaned heavily against the tempest. Deadened extremities warned of the danger of frost-bite, and they slanted course to avoid it. At intervals a stairway had to be kicked in resistant snow. A night was spent precariously and with fitful sleep on a narrow shelf of sloping slabs; and the second afternoon, benumbed in body and mind, they attained the prodigious height of 26,990 ft. on their own lung power. With only the immaculate pyramid of Everest above, they could look down and around on the rest of the world visible across the mists—the black head of Changtse, the twin peaks of Gyachung Kang and Cho-Oyu, and the snow cap of Pumori were beneath the level of their foothold.

But though some reserve of strength and spirit was retained, they "tacitly accepted defeat," and turned to the descent before it became too late. All the climbers except Somervell, the artist, who seemed impervious to storm, were fagged and blistered. Morshead was badly frostbitten and at his resources' end, and had at times to be supported during the trudge back to camp. A haggard quartet, too enervated to eat, reached the tents at midnight with the aid of a lantern and the flicker of lightning from far-off clouds.

Meanwhile Captain Finch had brought up the

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

oxygen cylinders from Kalimpong. His porters, cheery but sceptical, called it "English air." His climbing companions were Geoffrey Bruce and Lance-Corporal Tejbir, the most promising of the Gurkhas. On May 25th these three, wearing the apparatus, scaled the northern ridge in a determined attack which carried them to a crude camping site at 25,500 ft. Streamers of snow, puffing like gigantic plumes above the crests, testified to the ferocity of the wind. Optimism and a dash of bravado helped them to survive a night of acute discomfort, with "a fine frozen spindrift" penetrating their wraps and sleeping-bags, their canvas flapping with a noise like machine-gun fire. Some hours they fought for their lives against a gale which threatened to tear the tents from their minute platform and fling them down the glacier. In this predicament they were marooned two nights and a day, dosing themselves with oxygen as paralysis crept up their limbs. Then they went on (but without Tejbir) until their barometer recorded 27,300:—

"The point we reached is unmistakable even from afar. We were standing on a little rocky ledge, just inside an inverted V of snow, immediately below the great belt of reddish-yellow rock which cleaves its way almost horizontally through the otherwise greenish-black slabs of mountain. Though 1700 ft. below, we were well within half a mile of the summit, so close, indeed, that we could distinguish individual stones on a little patch of scree lying just underneath the highest point. Ours were truly the tortures of Tantalus; for, weak from hunger and exhausted by that nightmare struggle for life in our high camp, we were in no fit condition to proceed."

Enervated they were, but, unlike the earlier party, they ate ravenously on returning to lower levels. Several quails truffled in *pâté de foie gras*, followed by

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

nine sausages, left them asking for more. It must have been the oxygen. They fell asleep while still eating.

A third attempt was made that year. It ended in tragedy. The weather had broken. It revealed in a flash the stark truth of an assailant's earlier remark : "We were not playing with this mountain ; it might be playing with us." The battered assault groups had been obliged to pass some days of idleness recuperating at the base from the abnormal strain imposed upon them. Some were so badly frostbitten that they were ordered back to Darjeeling. Only Somervell, tireless in every weather with crayon and sketch-book, was left untouched by the vicissitudes of such a life. His astounding vigour appears on nearly every page of his comrades' diaries.

The monsoon had been released ; but the expedition still clung to the remaining chance of good fortune, and June 5th found the stalwarts up on the leese of Changtse in a cheerless camp choked with fresh snow, digging out their stores and making dispositions for a final sally. They saw the North Col, white-robed and perfidious. There was promise of an improvement, but special care was taken against the danger of concealed crevasses. Four parties on four separate ropes consisted of Leigh-Mallory, Crawford, and Somervell, with 14 porters who had volunteered to "go high." The stillness of their advance was suddenly interrupted by a violent report "like the explosion of untamped gunpowder." The entire slope was on the move, tumbling, accelerating. They were overwhelmed. Nine porters were swept over an ice-cliff and after a fearful struggle which went on for forty minutes only two of the nine were recovered alive. This catastrophe brought to an end the assault in 1922. Locally a simple stone cairn built above the glacier preserves the record of service

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN,

of seven faithful campaigners, which has been suitably immortalised elsewhere

The next episode in the fight for Everest came in 1924, when another expedition marched across Tibet with Lieutenant-Colonel Norton in command. It was greatly helped by the fact that some of its Gurkha N.C.O.'s by this time knew the routes to the lower camps and could lead the coolie caravan to them without European supervision ; but it was equally greatly hampered by the disappearance from the Rongbuk base of 52 of its local levies, who stole away in the night and went home. As soon as Norton and his men set foot upon the mountain they encountered appalling weather. Even the lower shelters were with difficulty re-established, and tact and much elaborate persuasion were needed to restore the remaining porters' ebbing spirits along the glacier trail. Sometimes in their exhausted state they had to be compelled to eat. The garrisons became quickly disorganised ; much nursing and doctoring had to be done ; and the early days of May were days of grave emergency.

Norton's plans had to be drastically revised. Snow fell unceasingly. The thermometer was well below zero—in this attenuated air a more exacting matter even than mere figures reveal. A group was marooned at Camp III for three days in a blizzard. Leigh-Mallory and Irvine showed signs of the strain imposed by this preliminary work and were sent down to rest ; and presently the windswept glacier route became a *via dolorosa*, and the whole force, a melancholy procession that included snowblind and frostbitten men careless whether they lived or died, had to be shepherded back to the valley. It must have resembled a section of the Napoleonic retreat from Moscow.

So complete was the defeat felt to be that it was arranged to get the entire personnel back to the

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Rongbuk Monastery to obtain the Holy Lama's blessing. The ceremony took place on May 15th; and the men returned to the mountain grateful for the Lama's prayers and enheartened for the further fray. The following day was brilliantly fine, Everest clear-cut and serene. Norton, with Somervell, Odell, and Leigh-Mallory, went up the Col by a new route, for they soon found that the great bay east of Changtse had undergone a striking metamorphosis. The map of Everest shows how Chang La (the North Col) forms a saddle connecting Changtse to the main mass of Chomo Lungma. This saddle is the authentic source of the "East" Glacier and accumulates masses of snow which press gradually down its slopes to feed the tributary glaciers, each year distorting its features as ice-cliffs and crevasses succeed one another in their titanic downward settlement.

A fourth camp was reconnoitred after a grim day's struggle across partially concealed crevasses. Irvine and Hazard brought up the picked porters, but a foretaste of monsoon dashed their hopes, and the situation in their lonely white world became suddenly serious when four porters detached themselves from the rest during a traverse of the bay and were isolated for a night. A load of food was lost over the cliff. All mountaineering dispositions had to be sacrificed to the emergency of rescuing the errant porters. By the time this was done—two of them escaped from shooting into space by a miracle—the "sahibs" were suffering from a variety of ills and the "tigers" had lost heart once more.

Another council of war was held. Another battle order was devised. On June 2nd two climbers and eight porters secured a fifth camp at 25,300 ft., in a wind that jolted them from their course and "took our breath away like a plunge into the icy waters of a mountain lake." These were superseded by Norton

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

and Somervell, who after a fair night at this encampment advanced up the *arête* and spread their frail tents on a made ledge at 26,800, in a region of sloping, striated slabs where no natural ledge large enough for a tent was discernible. Early in the third day's climb they struck the fringe of the formidable 1000 ft.-deep band of yellow sandstone which so conspicuously scars the northern face of the mountain. This they traversed diagonally, panting for breath. At 27,500 Norton began to "see double," a symptom of waning physical control due to lack of oxygen; but the day was singularly clear, and enough of imagination was left to them to thrill at the aspect of the wild tangle of Himalayan peaks spread about them.

With measured beat and slow they reached together the couloir which (like a frown) cuts vertically down below the crest. Somervell succumbed to throat trouble and found shelter beneath a rock. Norton reached a point fixed by theodolite at 28,130 ft. and rejoined his comrade after skirmishing among obstinate buttresses of rock. Then their retreat began. The last pyramid stood inviolate.

Norton's struggle on Everest, in 1924, was followed by that great venture of Leigh-Mallory and Irvine which began with the devising of improvements to the oxygen apparatus and ended in most tragic mystery behind the clouds. Norton, lying smitten with temporary blindness from the climb already described, said farewell to these two early on a June morning, little thinking that they were presently to vanish from human view for ever. Leigh-Mallory was the finest fighting spirit his generation of mountaineers had produced; "Sandy" Irvine was a cheerful junior, loved for his unselfishness, strength, and courage. They had already toiled up and down among the relay camps for a month and felt the cruel strain; but they climbed exultantly at the last.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

There could be no direct account of how they fared. All that is known is contained in this passage from Odell, who had gone up the ridge alone to observe what might be observed of the resolute pair .—

“ At about 26,000 ft. I climbed a little crag, and as I reached the top there was a sudden clearing of the atmosphere above me and I saw the whole summit ridge and final peak of Everest unveiled. I noticed far away, on a snow slope leading up to what seemed to be the last step but one from the base of the final pyramid, a tiny object moving and approaching the rock step. A second object followed, and then the first climbed to the top of the step. As I stood intently watching this dramatic appearance, the scene became enveloped in cloud once more, and I could not actually be certain that I saw the second figure join the first. . . .”

The pair were on moderately difficult ground, moving expeditiously, as if making up for lost time. They went into oblivion. All watching and waiting for their return was in vain. Peak and ridge were scrutinised whenever the clouds rolled away from them, but the features of Everest looked back in frigid disdain upon the scrutineers, and the chain of climbers accepted at length the sad reverse and withdrew into the valley.

For nine years Everest remained undisturbed, its limbs and mantle-folds untrodden except, perhaps, by abominable snowmen. Twice in April 1933 a great mechanical bird came flying up from the Indian plains and zoomed over the highest Himalayan crests—but that is another story. By that time Hugh Ruttledge had been appointed leader of a new ground expedition; and the Dzongpens and headmen of Phari, Kampa, Shekar, and Kharta districts had been warned by the Lhasa Ministry, under seal dated the twelfth month of the “Water-monkey Year,” of

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

the approach, composition, and requirement of the Ruttledge party, "to ascend the snowy mountain of Chamalung in the first month of the Water-bird Year." Nine years is a full generation in the reckoning of high altitudes, and the personnel which in April 1933 passed from the austere architecture of the Buddhist monasteries to the yet more austere fortifications of Everest was almost entirely different from that of 1924. Smythe, Shipton, (Dr) Greene, and (Captain) Birnie, the four comrades of the conquest of Mount Kamet, formed its nucleus. Of the others Wager came from the Greenland expeditions, Wyn Harris from climbing in Kenya; Wood-Johnson had been up in the Sikkim Himalaya, Boustead in the Lhonak region, Longland was a capable rock-climber, and Brocklebank and McLean brought plenty of Alpine experience. Crawford was a veteran of the 1922 expedition, in which he had performed astonishing feats in guiding caravans of porters up and down the North Col six times in seven days.

With an intimate knowledge of Gurkhas and Sherpas Ruttledge's leadership devoted scrupulous care to the well-being of the porters. He could treat them as fellow-mountaineers. He was perfectly alive to their chief characteristics—boundless good humour, raucous laughter from every sangar, a belittling of every hardship up to a point, but immovable self-pity once a real depression had set in. The keynote of Ruttledge's strategy was slow acclimatisation. The work of manning relay camps up the mountainside was timed to ensure that a maximum number of climbers should reach their assault positions fit and unstrained. In the re-establishment of the base camp the 1933 expedition had an advantage of twelve days over its predecessors, and Camp I was in full occupation by April 21. The quarters of the North Col were

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

garrisoned and larded and—sign of the times—linked by telephone wires.

A wireless receiver was installed at Camp III to report the approach of the monsoon across the Bay of Bengal. Before Camp V could be secured on the *arête* monsoon clouds were massing for the attack and wild western wind currents were throwing them up and back across the ridges. Until this point the climbers felt themselves to be on the threshold of victory. But luck turned against them. On May 24th all movement aloft was a terrible ordeal, with a full gale blowing, a sound as of heavy surf beating against the North Col, and a sea of spindrift hissing over the ridge and obliterating everything. Stores were buried in snow. Eight picked porters were sent down with frostbite. Camp IV became overcrowded as those above retreated on it and was simultaneously threatened with complete extinction under a constant fusillade of small avalanches. The exposed corner had to be declared untenable and an intermediate camp occupied. Each invalid carrier had to be manhandled to safety down a rope ladder in the bleak shadow of the ice-wall.

Despite the monsoon there was no question of retreat. An immediate renewal of the assault was ordered. The "tigers" were found ready and eager; the record of the next advance described them as "showing a steadiness and ability beyond all expectation." This was on May 29th, when Wager, Longland, and Wyn Harris ascended to 27,400 ft and planted a little 10 lb. tent on a precarious foothold half-way up the scar of yellow limestone which marked the limit of Norton's effort in 1924. It was within half a mile of the summit. After some essence of chicken, tinned loganberries, and a thirsty, comfortless night Wyn Harris and Wager (Longland having guided the porters down again) thawed their boots and went

MEN AND THE MOUNTAIN

upward. Just after the sun appeared Wyn Harris found an ice-axe lying on the smooth brown slabs some 60 ft. below the crest of the ridge. It looked astonishingly new. Its discovery was naturally the subject of much subsequent discussion. It has been accepted as probable that the axe belonged to either Leigh-Mallory or Irvine and must have escaped its owner's grip on the downward journey, but its link with the actual scene of the 1924 tragedy is still conjecture.

After testing unsuccessfully first a ridge and then a gully Wyn Harris and Wager crept cautiously forward and, at rather over 28,100 ft., made a sensational crossing of the great couloir below the pyramid. Just beyond it came a realisation that the limit of reasonable climbing had been attained, and they therefore turned to descend, but not before they had taken stock of their surroundings for the benefit of posterity. Wager even dragged himself to the excrescence known as the "First Step" to peer down the stupendous south-east precipice, the only human being who has done so.

Smythe and Shipton took up the "running." They enjoyed a peaceful evening in the solitary tent styled "Camp VI," but were then marooned in it another day and night by a blizzard, their only fear being that its continuance might preclude ascent and descent alike. Resuming, they found the shelving ledges concealed beneath fresh snow. Shipton capitulated to stomach trouble and wisely returned to the tent. Smythe wandered on alone. Alone he groped his way across the couloir and round the buttress beyond, cutting his steps in the vertical wall. The description he brought back gave some conception of the utter loneliness of the morning's labours.—

"Owing to their steepness, the abrupt walls separating the shelving ledges were free of snow, but

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

the ledges along which progress had to be made were covered with snow, into which I sank knee deep and sometimes thigh deep. Sometimes I had to burrow and grope in the snow for holds. It was work of the most exacting kind. Time alone rendered the summit inaccessible under such conditions. The bitterness of defeat was brought home to me, but it was a bitterness mercifully dulled by altitude. It was somewhere near my highest point that a small protuberance on which I was standing came clean away. Luckily my ice-axe pick was jammed in a crack at the time and a fall was prevented. It was a near thing, but it seemed a trivial incident at the time. At 28,000 ft the brain is incapable of registering strong emotion."

Back in the topmost little green tent, one of the most solitary outposts ever occupied, Smythe secluded himself from the furious drumming of the snowcharged winds, shut his mind to the hundred hypotheses with which the unfinished task assailed it, and enjoyed a night of exceptionally sound sleep. His journey down was resumed in a frenzied storm that sometimes reduced him to crawling on hands and knees. And within a few hours of his escape Everest was white from top to toe, and the weather had busted the whole party with extreme lack of ceremony off the mountain. They had, like Leontes, "paid down more penitence than done trespass"

There were two more encounters with Everest. One was in 1935—an exploration under Shipton's skilled guidance, which did much excellent survey work among surrounding glaciers and mountains, and recaptured, besides, something of the fine romance of the first reconnaissance of fourteen years earlier. Ascents were not essential to its programme, but it conquered 26 peaks over 20,000 ft. betweenwhiles. The next was in 1936, when another expedition at

THE COUNTRY

full strength, under Ruttledge again, stood at the threshold and knocked. Everest behaved with a dismaying perfidy. The drawbridge was lowered, the courtyard opened. The stronghold seemed prepared to offer a friendly welcome. But the keep was suddenly bolted and barred. A deep blanket of snow clogged movement on the North Col. The Tibetan veterans displayed a scorn of its perils that had to be corrected ; the spirit of attack was strong in them ; but disillusion came as the mortcloth of snow thickened everywhere. The climbers, morose in their tents, hoped for a cleansing wind, but were " imprisoned between what was felt and what was feasible " Not until May 29th could a genuine north-wester be registered, and it was too short-lived to be serviceable. On June 6th a full gale raging, Wyn Harris and Shipton were caught in a major avalanche while testing a traverse on Chang La and emerged with a bad shaking. Ruttledge decided that his men had pushed their energies on the Col to the very limit and vowed never again to venture up its eastern face during a monsoon. To the incessant snow of 1936 there was (as he declared) no answer.

ANONYMOUS

THE COUNTRY

It is a curious fact, of which I can think of no satisfactory explanation, that enthusiasm for country life and love of natural scenery are strongest and most widely diffused precisely in those European countries which have the worst climate and where the search for the picturesque involves the greatest discomfort. Nature worship increases in an exact ratio with distance from the Mediterranean. The Italians and the Spanish have next to no interest in nature for its own sake. The French feel a certain affection for

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

the country, but not enough to make them desire to live in it if they can possibly inhabit the town. The south Germans and Swiss form an apparent exception to the rule. They live nearer to the Mediterranean than the Parisians, and yet they are fonder of the country. But the exception, as I have said, is only apparent; for owing to their remoteness from the ocean and the mountainous conformation of the land, these people enjoy for a large part of each year a climate that is, to all intents, arctic. In England, where the climate is detestable, we love the country so much that we are prepared, for the privilege of living in it, to get up at seven, summer and winter, bicycle, wet or fine, to a distant station and make an hour's journey to our place of labour. In our spare moments we go for walking tours, and we regard caravanning as a pleasure. In Holland the climate is far more unpleasant than in England and we should consequently expect the Dutch to be even keener country-fanciers than ourselves. The ubiquitous water makes it difficult, however, for season-ticket holders to settle down casually in the Dutch countryside. But if unsuitable as building land, the soggy meadows of the Low Countries are firm enough to carry tents. Unable to live permanently in the country, the Dutch are the greatest campers in the world. Poor Uncle Toby, when he was campaigning in those parts, found the damp so penetrating that he was forced to burn good brandy in his tent to dry the air. But then my Uncle Toby was a mere Englishman, brought up in a climate which, compared with that of Holland, is balmy. The hardier Dutch camp out for pleasure. Of Northern Germany it is enough to say that it is the home of the wander-birds. And as for Scandinavia—it is well known that there is no part of the world, excluding the tropics, where people so freely divest themselves

THE COUNTRY

of their clothing. The Swedish passion for nature is so strong that it can only be adequately expressed when in a state of nature. "As souls unbodied," says Donne, "bodies unclothed must be to taste whole joys" Noble, nude, and far more modern than any other people in Europe, they sport in the icy waters of the Baltic, they roam naked in the primeval forest. The cautious Italian, meanwhile, bathes in his tepid sea during only two months out of the twelve ; always wears a vest under his shirt, and never leaves the town, if he can possibly help it, except when the summer is at its most hellish, and again, for a little while, in the autumn, to superintend the making of his wine.

Strange and inexplicable state of affairs ! Is it that the dwellers under inclement skies are trying to bluff themselves into a belief that they inhabit Eden ? Do they deliberately love nature in the hope of persuading themselves that she is as beautiful in the damp and darkness as in the sunlight ? Do they brave the discomforts of northern country life in order to be able to say to those who live in more favoured lands : You see, our countryside is just as delightful as yours ; and the proof is that we live in it !

But whatever the reason, the fact remains that nature worship does increase with distance from the sun. To search for causes is hopeless ; but it is easy and at the same time not uninteresting to catalogue effects. Thus, our Anglo-Saxon passion for the country has had the result of turning the country into one vast town ; but a town without the urban conveniences which makes tolerable life in a city. For we all love the country so much that we desire to live in it, if only during the night, when we are not at work. We build cottages, buy season tickets and bicycles to take us to the station. And meanwhile the country perishes. The Surrey I knew as a

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

boy was full of wildernesses. To-day Hindhead is hardly distinguishable from the Elephant and Castle. Mr. Lloyd George has built a week-end cottage (not, one feels, without a certain appositeness) at the foot of the Devil's Jumps ; and several thousand people are busily following his example. Every lane is now a street. Harrod's and Selfridge's call daily. There is no more country, at any rate within fifty miles of London. Our love has killed it.

Except in summer, when it is too hot to stay in town, the French, and still more, the Italians, do not like the country. The result is that they still have country not to like. Solitude stretches almost to the gates of Paris. (And Paris, remember, still has gates ; you drive up to them along country roads, enter and find yourself within a few minutes of the centre of the city.) The silence sleeps unbroken, except by the faint music of ghosts, within a mile of the Victor Emanuel monument at Rome

In France, in Italy, none but countrymen live in the country. Agriculture there is taken seriously ; farms are still farms and not week-end cottages , and the corn is still permitted to grow on what, in England, would be desirable building land.

In Italy, despite the fact that the educated Italians like the country still less than the French, there are fewer complete solitudes than in France, because there are more countrymen. And how few there are in France ! A drive from the Belgian frontier to the Mediterranean puts life and meaning into those statistics from which we learn, academically and in theory, that France is under-populated. Long stretches of open road extend between town and town.

" Like stones of worth they thinly placéd are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet."

THE COUNTRY

Even the villages are few and far between. And those innumerable farms which shine out from among the olive trees on Italian hillsides—one looks in vain for their French counterpart. Driving through the fertile plains of Central France, one can turn one's eyes over the fields and scarcely see a house. And then, what forests still grow on French soil! Huge tracts of uninhabited woodland, with not a week-ender or a walking tourist to be seen within their shades.

This state of things is delightful to me personally ; for I like the country, enjoy solitude, and take no interest in the political future of France. But to a French patriot I can imagine that a drive across his native land must seem depressing. Huge populations, upon whose skulls the bump of philoprogenitiveness can be seen at a quarter of a mile, pullulate on the further side of almost every frontier. Without haste, without rest, as though by a steadily continued miracle, the Germans and the Italians multiply themselves, like loaves and fishes. Every three years a million brand new Teutons peer across the Rhine, a million Italians are wondering where they are going to find room, in their narrow country, to live. And there are no more Frenchmen. Twenty years hence, what will happen ? The French Government offers prizes to those who produce large families. In vain ; even in the least educated classes there are no prejudices and a great deal of thrift. Hordes of blackamoors are drilled and armed , but blackamoors can be but a poor defence, in the long run, against European philoprogenitiveness. Sooner or later, this half-empty land will be colonised. It may be done peacefully, it may be done with violence ; let us hope peacefully, with the consent and at the invitation of the French themselves. Already the French import, temporarily, I forget how many foreign

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

labourers every year. In time, no doubt, the foreigners will begin to settle: the Italians in the south, the Germans in the east, the Belgians in the north, perhaps even a few English in the west.

The Portuguese who, in the later sixteenth and the seventeenth century, suffered acutely from under-population (half the able-bodied men had emigrated to the colonies, where they died in war or of tropical diseases, while those who stayed at home were periodically decimated by famine—for the colonies produced only gold, not bread) solved their problem by importing negro slaves to work the deserted fields. The negroes settled. They intermarried with the inhabitants. In two or three generations the race which had conquered half the world was extinct, and Portugal, with the exception of a small area in the north, was inhabited by a hybrid race of Eur-Africans. The French may think themselves lucky if, avoiding war, they can fill their depleted country with civilised white men.

Meanwhile, the emptiness of France is a delight to every lover of nature and solitude. But even in Italy, where farms and peasants and peasants' children are thick on the land, the lover of the country feels much happier than he does in what may actually be more sparsely inhabited districts of the home counties. For farms and peasants are country products, as truly native to the land as trees or growing corn, and as inoffensive. It is the urban interloper who ruins the English country. Neither he nor his house belong to it. In Italy, on the other hand, when the rare trespasser from the town does venture into the country, he finds it genuinely rustic. The country is densely populated, but it is still the country. It has not been killed by the deadly kindness of those who, like myself, are nature's townsmen.

The time is not far distant, I am afraid, when every

THE COUNTRY

countryside in Europe, even the Spanish, will be invaded by nature lovers from the towns. It is not so long ago, after all, since Evelyn was horrified and disgusted by the spectacle of the rocks at Clifton. Till the end of the eighteenth century every sensible man, even in England, even in Sweden, feared and detested mountains. The modern enthusiasm for wild nature is a recent growth and began—along with kindness to animals, industrialism, and railway travelling—among the English. (It is, perhaps, not surprising that the people which first made their cities uninhabitable with dirt, noise, and smoke should also have been the first to love nature.) From this island country sentiment has spread with machinery. All the world welcomed machinery with delight, but country sentiment has so far flourished only in the north. Still, there are evident signs that even the Latins are becoming infected by it. In France and Italy wild nature has become—though to a far less extent than in England—the object of *snobisme*. It is rather chic, in those countries, to be fond of nature. In a few years, I repeat, everybody will adore it as a matter of course. For even in the north those who do not in the least like the country are made to imagine that they do by the artful and never-ceasing suggestions of the people whose interest it is that the country should be liked. No modern man, even if he loathed the country, could resist the appeal of the innumerable advertisements, published by railways, motor-car manufacturers, thermos flask makers, sporting tailors, house agents, and all the rest whose livelihood depends on his frequently visiting the country. Now the art of advertising in the Latin countries is still poorly developed. But it is improving even there. The march of progress is irresistible. Fiat and the State Railways have only to hire American advertising managers to turn the Italians into a race

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

of week-enders and season-ticket holders. Already there is a *Città Giardino* on the outskirts of Rome; Ostia is being developed as a residential seaside suburb; the recently opened motor road has placed the Lakes at the mercy of Milan. My grandchildren, I foresee, will have to take their holidays in Central Asia.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

A MOTOR DRIVE IN THE U.S.A.

Why this is indeed a show—it has called the dead out of the earth!

WALT WHITMAN

I NOW come to the most painful experience—or rather series of experiences—of my entire visit to the United States of America. Looking back on it from a distance of time and—thank Heaven—of space also, I can still feel the horror of the nightmare. The hot breath of the Apocalyptic Horsemen is still on my neck and I still wake up on occasions in peaceful England, cold with terror from the dream that I am once again upon the road to Los Angeles

This is what happened. A young American friend of mine offered to drive me down from San Francisco to Los Angeles in his Oldsmobile. I accepted—poor silly creature—with grateful alacrity. The alternatives were the train, with which I was getting bored, and the aeroplane, of which I have always been afraid, and so the prospect of a pleasant couple of days, dawdling down the Pacific Coast, was alluring. Even when we were breakfasting together in San Francisco, at 7 A.M. on the day of our start, my young friend and I, an obvious hint of what was ahead of me was dropped, but I, still wrapped in a fool's paradise and a European's idea of motor-

A MOTOR DRIVE IN THE U.S.A.

travelling, hardly noticed it, let alone treated it seriously.

"We'll be there in time for dinner," remarked my friend (whom for simplicity's sake I will henceforth call Louis) Knowing the distance to be about 480 miles, I ignored such a flippant excursion into the spheres of unreality, and continued my breakfast. Even when Louis added casually that he regularly did the trip in less than twelve hours, I did not awake to the seriousness of the situation.

We started off at about 7.30 A.M. and bowled out on to the splendid road to San José. At first the pace was the ordinary moderate speed to which I had become accustomed in America. That is to say, we seldom dropped below sixty and never rose above seventy. It was a glorious morning. The sun was shining, the sky was blue, the air was crisp, and although I was sad at leaving San Francisco, there was at least the small measure of consolation that is afforded by the perennial thrill of being on the road again, and heading for new country. I lay back in my seat, stretched my legs out, carolled a stave or two and gazed vacuously at the Heavens or at the landscape.

But after San José I began to feel a perceptible change. The wind was blowing a little harder, the note of the horn was a little more shrill, and the rest of the traffic seemed to be moving a little more slowly when it was going in the same direction as ourselves and a little more quickly when it was coming towards us. At first I was a little drowsy and did not appreciate the significance of these small changes. But when, in the middle of a yawn, I glanced at the speedometer and saw that we were moving at about 90 m.p.h. I sat up abruptly. From that moment I had no more peace. Louis' jaw was stuck out, his eyes were flashing, and he crouched

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

over his wheel like a dark demon. It was a terrifying experience. Louis did not let up for an instant. If ever he felt that he was losing his dash he would switch on the radio and the thunder of Tannhauser or the blood-exciting music of Carmen would spur him to still more dreadful excesses of locomotion. The landscape whizzed past us, and out of many scores of miles between San José and San Luis Obispo I have no recollection of anything except the wide, tree-filled stony bed of the Salinas River.

If we crossed that river once, we must have crossed it a dozen times, backwards and forwards, from east to west and from west to east, and, for all I know, from north-east by east to south-west by west and back again. We crossed it on long steel bridges and on massive concrete bridges, on suspension bridges and on sextuple spans, on viaducts and cantilevers, on cast-iron, wrought-iron, tubular, lattice-girder, and quadrangular-girder bridges, in short on every variety of bridge known to man except the Peruvian rope-bridge of the style of San Luis Rey. And the extraordinary thing was that not once did I see a drop of water in the Salinas River. However, I was not surprised. I was long past surprise by this time, or indeed any emotion whatsoever except terror. I cannot even remember where we stopped for lunch. All I know is that Louis said we could easily lunch in seventeen minutes, and that the restaurant sold no form of stimulant stronger than coffee.

A welcome halt was at the old Spanish Mission-house of San Miguel Arcángel, a late eighteenth-century building, adobe with red tiles, standing on the highway that is called El Camino del Rey to this day. We pulled the clapper-rope of an old greenish-silvery bell that stood outside the door, and a Franciscan came out and showed us round. There was a small museum with a number of relics of the old

A MOTOR DRIVE IN THE U.S.A

Hispano-Indian days, cooking utensils, metal-work, and so on, but by far the most interesting things were the frescoes on the wall of the Chapel. They were painted by Indians with Indian materials, but presumably under the general directions of the Franciscans. For instance, the Madonna is Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, but the face is a face of an Indian woman, and the abstract decorations, in faded blues and greens and pinks, never came from the brush of a countryman of Velázquez. The bell which we rang was made of silver from the mines of Peru and was one of a chain of mission-bells on the Highway of the King from San Francisco Solano in the north to San Pedro y San Pablo on the Mexican border.

I tried to linger among the almond-trees in the Mission garden, but the demon driver was impatient to be on his way again. We had wasted nearly twenty minutes as it was.

There are one or two curious features about motor-driving in the United States, and, during this maniacal rush down the Pacific Coast, I had an occasional opportunity, in the brief intervals between prayers, oaths, gasps, thank-offerings for unbelievable escapes, and vows of future libations to St. Christopher, of considering them. For instance, there is far less ill-temper upon American roads than upon European. Heaven knows there is far more cause for ill-temper in America, for the things which drivers do to each other would lead to a widespread epidemic of assassination if they were done in Europe. The only rule seemed to be that the automobile with its nose in front—even if it is only an eighth of an inch—goes ahead and the rest put their brakes on. A car coming out of a farm-lane on to a giant highroad with six rows of racing automobiles flashing past, has only to push out in

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

front of a triple string and the whole traffic has to pull up for it. So long as it is in front, that seems to be good enough. The triple string jams on its brakes, waltzes all over the road, turns somersaults, whizzes round in circles, and nobody seems to mind. There is very little swearing and hardly any horn-blowing. If you did a thing like that in England you would hear some surprising things about yourself, the air would be shattered with infuriated screeches from electric horns, and probably a retired lieutenant-colonel would bounce up from somewhere and take your name and address to prosecute you for dangerous driving. If you did it in France the leading trio of the triple string would hit you fore, aft, and amidships, and the remainder of the main-road traffic would race unconcernedly over the debris. In Germany you would, of course, spend most of the rest of your life in a Nazi dungeon. But in America nothing happens at all. The main stream pulls up. You amble across. The main stream goes on again. Another peculiar feature about the road-traffic is the Speed-Cop. His duty in life is to cruise about the roads whithersoever the spirit moves him in order to check the monstrous speed excesses of people like Louis. And he has my warmest good-will in his task. For this purpose he is mounted upon a high-powered motor-bicycle. Now America is a land of fast cheap motor-cars and, in consequence, motor-bicycles are very uncommon. When it is possible to buy a very fine car for a handful of dollars, no one is going to ride upon a motor-bicycle unless it is given away with a drink of Coca Cola or enclosed in a packet of chewing-gum. When, therefore, the speed-lunatics see a motor-bicycle in the far distance, they are safe to assume that the odds are about fifteen to one that it is bestridden by a Speed-Cop, and accordingly they slacken speed

A MOTOR DRIVE IN THE U.S.A.

from ninety miles an hour to a demure seventy. There is a further protection for the law-breaker. The Speed-Cop's machine is painted white and it is thereby the more clearly distinguishable at a distance. In fact the only real danger of being seized by the Law is when you come suddenly on one of its representatives round a corner. But that happens seldom. All too seldom.

Motoring in America provides one of the very few examples of an American word or expression being shorter than the corresponding English one. G. K. Chesterton has pointed out in an immortal poem how the American hustler has to say "Elevator" because he hasn't time to say "Lift," and "Apartment" for "Flat," and so on. And in motoring, at first the American ran true to form by saying "Gasoline" instead of "Petrol." But then some genius came along, almost certainly an Englishman, who pointed out that gasoline could be shortened to gas, and after a few years of careful deliberation and methodical study of the proposition, the American nation agreed that in all probability, without prejudice, and subject to the final decision of the Supreme Court, the word "Gas" might be conceded to be a shorter word than "Gasoline," and so it was adopted throughout the land with extreme reluctance and misgiving.

As we hurled ourselves southwards, I could see, in the momentary gaps between the towns, that the vegetation was becoming more and more tropical. Palms were taller and cactus more hideous. Poinsettias were splashing the countryside with their gorgeous flames, and for the first time I saw the graceful leaves and crimson berries of the pepper-tree. Lemon-groves and bougainvillaea and blue plumbago and yellow-flowered acacias did their gaily coloured best to distract me from the demon-driver

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

and his hazards, and here and there clusters of oil-derricks ruined the view of the Pacific. The small towns of California are just as ugly as the small towns in any part of the Middle West, and consist, so far as one can see, solely of petrol-pumps and advertisements. Occasionally a two-storied wooden house peeps coyly over the top of a mammoth hoarding, but as a general rule it is practically impossible to detect the lairs to which the populace creeps after its long day spent in contemplation of pictorial vulgarity. Oddly enough, the American advertiser makes very little use of sex-appeal in his assaults upon the public fancy. It is very rare to see pictures of bathing nymphs, or long silk legs, or classical studies of Aphrodite, or deep-bosomed Junos, or the Rape of the Sabine Women, or ladies clad only in suspender-belts, or Cleopatra's sultry languor upon a divan, such as are the delight of his English colleague. In America a motor-car, let us say a Spoffin Super-Six, is usually advertised by a huge announcement which simply says "Spoffin Super-Six is the Best," or else by a picture of the car itself, whereas in England its merits will be conveyed to the world by a girl in shorts and a brassière, and with unbelievably long legs, gazing out across the Bay of Naples.

The American small town, in effect, is a mass of slogans on boards and practically nothing else.

And when you come to think of it, this plastering of the rural hamlets with exhortations to purchase this or that is a very poor example of the business acumen of the American. For if the hamlet is as completely deserted as it appears to be, it is obvious that local custom will be non-existent. While if the slogans are designed to attract the eye of the passing motorist, again the labour is in vain. For the passing motorist passes so very quickly that he sees

A MOTOR DRIVE IN THE U.S.A.

nothing but a smudge of blaring colour, and in a moment more he is out into the countryside without the faintest recollection of what he has been implored to purchase. Of course there are the hitch-hikers, who have plenty of leisure to study the slogans as they amble past, but so far as I could judge from their appearances, these gentlemen seemed unlikely to be in a position to buy goods in any considerable quantity.

Hour after hour we rushed southwards, and any faint hopes that I may have cherished that Louis might relax the giddy speed as he grew tired, steadily waned. If anything he drove faster and faster as it began to dawn upon him that he had a very good chance of beating his previous record for the course. And then, just as I had given up all thought of ever seeing my native country again, hope flared up again. For a signpost, of which I was able to catch a glimpse as Louis slowed down for an instant to seventy miles an hour so as not to assassinate an elderly pedestrian, told me that we were approaching the City of the Patron Saint and Protectress of all artillerymen, and I knew that I, an old gunner of the World War, was in the safe keeping of the Blessed Barbara. The sun came out as we ran merrily into the bright, broad streets of the town, and the cheerful colours of the Spanish houses competed with the flowers and the flags and the streamers to give us a triumphal entry. There was high festival that day in Santa Barbara for some reason or other, and I was determined to join in, if only for half-an-hour, to get a rest from the demon-driver. Threatening, therefore, to brain Louis with a spanner if he did not halt, I compelled him to drive to an Olde Englyshe Tudor Hostelrie, complete with beer mugs, bogus timbers, pictures of hunting scenes with the Belvoir and the Quorn, portraits of Mr. Pickwick,

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

and cosy little inglenooks, where I spent one of the brightest half-hours of my life, restoring my shattered nerves, pouring libations to Santa Barbara, fortifying myself against the last lap in the journey, and resolutely preventing Louis from touching anything stronger than the beverage which in America is called, for some reason, beer. So mellow, indeed, did I become and so forgiving, that I solemnly withdrew my prayer to the Lady of Cannons that Louis should be served as her father Dioscorus had been served in 240 A.D. (or it may have been 306 A.D. ; pedants haggle about it to this day), and allotted a whole lightning bolt to himself.

The sun was setting over the Pacific, and occasionally a ray of golden light peeped through the oil-derricks, as we swung down the last hundred miles into Los Angeles. Louis drove as fast as ever, but I sat happily in my corner, singing loudly the song about the artillery at the Battle of the Marne and how

“ . . . her legend witnesseth
Barbara, the saint of gunners, and a stay in
sudden death ! ”

and at nightfall we reached the City of the Angels.

Los Angeles is a weird place. I had been warned many times by American friends that I must expect to find a mushroom-town filled to overflowing with exquisitely beautiful young ladies. My first impression was that Los Angeles is a toadstool town filled to overflowing with centenarians. I pottered about the streets in goggling amazement that any place could be so ugly and at the same time contain so many ugly people. Old, old ladies in black billowing skirts and woollen stockings, high boots and ancient hats, clutching in one hand a small-sized carpet-bag and in the other an eighteenth-century

A MOTOR DRIVE IN THE U.S.A.

umbrella, eddied to and fro aimlessly. Old, old gentlemen in suits that must have been dilapidated when Czolgosz shot President McKinley, peered vacantly into shop-windows. The whole population of the town seemed to have completed one century and to have nothing whatever in the world to do except to wait for the completion of a second. I discovered afterwards, of course, that these are the Middle-Westerners who have come to Los Angeles to die and find that it is a good deal harder than they expected.

Being citizens of not especially keen imaginations, they can think of no better occupation than strolling about the streets, thereby giving Los Angeles a world-wide reputation of doddiness and longevity. The exquisitely beautiful young ladies, on the other hand, do not obtrude themselves on the casual visitor until he realises that they are all working in shops, cafés, restaurants, hotels, and so on, holding temporary occupations until such time as they can catch the eye of a Film Director and leap in one bound to Stardom. They are all lovely, and most of them look as if they would steal the blankets off the death-bed of a blind grand-aunt. Many of the accused men and women in the Chicago police courts looked like innocent little lambkins in comparison with these hard-eyed beauties of Los Angeles.

The toadstool itself is astonishing. Bits of fungoid growth shoot up out of the earth hither and thither. Sometimes it may take the form of a few skyscrapers, sometimes of a garbage-dump, sometimes of a residential quarter, and sometimes of a board announcing that a superlatively big, or luxurious, or beautiful, or all three, building is likely to be put up on that site in the near future, and sometimes of the inevitable mound of rusty tins. The streets are vast and imposing, and often run for miles through

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

the city with nothing on either side except green fields. I should think there is more opportunity for nature-study within the city boundaries of Los Angeles than in any other urban district in the world, and the rabbit shooting must be superb. Indeed, the aged Iowans and Nebraskans must often be reminded of their native prairies when passing down some of the streets of the city of their adoption.

The motor-cars of Los Angeles provide plenty of amusement for the stranger. There are a great many of them—more, I believe, per head of population than in any other town in the world—and most of them must have been clanking down the country lanes round the tiny villages of Hollywood and Glendale and Burbank many a long year before the cinematograph industry came to California. The oldest cars in the world must be in Los Angeles, coeval, many of them, with the Middle Western veterans. Of course there is a sprinkling of modern motor-cars, and here and there a lordly Rolls-Royce glides past with its film star or its bediamonded magnate. But in the main they belong to one or other of those famous categories, the sort that cost fifty dollars ten years ago and the sort that cost ten dollars fifty years ago.

But it is not easy to see much of Los Angeles. Hospitality is so boundlessly lavish, and kindness to visitors so warm and generous, that there is little time for sight-seeing. My chief recollections are a cocktail party in Hollywood of film actors and actresses, scenarists, playwrights, dialogue-writers, and directors, all of whom were British; two days of fog which gave me even more pleasure than the fog at the Berkeley Country Club at San Francisco; the old-world splendour of the porters at the Biltmore Hotel, who are dressed as English hunting squires in top-hats, black coats, white breeches, and long boots

MOSCOW

with orange tops ; a visit to the Mexican quarter in the older part of the town ; and being compelled to celebrate Armistice Day with a glass of absinthe at 10 o'clock in the morning.

By this time my constitution was having an increasingly difficult struggle with American hospitality, and it was a very jaded traveller who crept surreptitiously out of Los Angeles and escaped in the night to Arizona.

A. G. MACDONELL

MOSCOW

THOUGH it is impossible to meet Russians except on specific business, the Moscow day is pleasantly varied. The first difficulty is to determine what day it is, since the names of our seven-day week have fallen into abeyance. You use the date, and when it happens to be divisible by six, you realise that the day is a holiday and all business is suspended. If, however, you succeed in remembering when the Christian Sunday falls, you can visit the private markets. The larger of these is the Sukharevsky, generally known as the flea-market—for obvious reasons. I went with the daughter of the Norwegian Minister, who displayed the prowess of a prize-fighter as we clawed our way through the mob. It was literally a question of clawing ; for as the ground was of frozen snow, very uneven and covered with an inch of water, the upright position was made possible only by the absence of space in which to fall down. If, after one had hit two or three obstructionists sharply in the ribs, the crowd happened to part, one either lurched forward on to one's enemy's neck or fell grovelling at his feet. Half the crowd were vendors ; the other half, purchasers. The vendors

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

just stand, gazing into eternity, and holding their wares at shoulder level. And what wares! Torn camisoles, threadbare goloshes, soiled shirt collars were the subject of protracted negotiation. One man, as we passed, thrust a single spat at us. My companion told me she had heard—though she could not absolutely vouch for it—that on one occasion a vendor had been seen whose only commodity was the ace of spades. Eventually we reached a row of photographers' booths. Though we shrank, in the interests of hygiene, from the scarlet-and-gold Cossack uniforms which sitters were in the habit of donning, the backcloth of an Italian garden, with a Zeppelin hovering above the cypresses, was not to be resisted. We posed ourselves before an apparatus like a Heath Robinson incubator, and the result was one which those who have been privileged to see it will not forget.

From the Sukharevsky we proceeded to the Arbat market, a smaller enclosure, where the dispossessed classes sell such treasures, icons, lace, and jewellery, as they have still retained. Here we met the director of the Antique department of Torgsin, who was also, like us, in search of bargains. Thence we took a tram. This statement may seem uninteresting. But the action itself resembled the Eton wall-game. After several sorties had been repulsed with severe casualties, we boarded the driver's platform. A little old man then slammed the door on my companion's arm, who was thus pinned like Jane Douglas defending her king. "Damn you," I said in English, very angry, "what do you want to do that to a woman for?" "Now, now," replied the offender, also in English, "you mustn't talk like that, because I understand everything you say. Please forgive me. I am blind." At this I was filled with remorse, and to make amends we saw the poor old man off the

MOSCOW

tram at his destination, and put him on his right road.

That evening I went to the Metropole, in bachelor company, to "see life." Unlike India, where one cannot appear outside one's bedroom after dark except in evening dress, this entailed changing back out of a bourgeois dinner-jacket into a proletarian lounge-suit. On arrival at the hotel, we proceeded into an apartment like the Crystal Palace. At intervals over this gigantic hall stood enormous lamp-posts bearing each a basket of two or three hundred naked electric-light bulbs. On a dais thirty Gipsies were exhibiting voice and leg with that artificial verve peculiar to the modern cabaret. In the middle of the floor a fountain was plashing monotonously into a piscine tenanted by gyrating carp, whose movements were obscured by a sudden movement of coloured lights. This coincided with the arrival of the dance band. In company with a few others I took the floor with a girl from the Leningrad ballet. Later we moved to the bar, a stupendous perspective of bottles (and cyclamens in bowls) which even Shanghai might envy.

It was half-past three before we emerged into the silence of the snow-covered streets and the biting cold air. Across the Opera square we descried an *izvostchik* asleep on his sledge. He sat huddled in his great blue coat, with icicles twinkling on his beard. We woke him, settled ourselves under the rug, turned the corner by the Historical Museum, and galloped on to the Red Square. Above Lenin's tomb the red flag floated from a green dome over the rose-red Kremlin walls, symbol of the sleeping Muscovites' dominion. But they were not all asleep. As we reached the river a party of five came swaying up a side-street, playing a balalaika and singing softly to the night as though it were June and they nightingales.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

My weeks in Moscow passed like a single day, so great was their variety. The resident foreigners proved a source of unfailing hospitality and entertainment—journalists rushing out to get their despatches censored by the Foreign Office, diplomats engaged in a civilised existence of their own, disciples of Marx ploughing their way through Lenin's commentaries on the Master, together with such isolated phenomena as Mr. Chattopadaya, brother to Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, complaining of the leniency displayed by the secret police towards its, and his, political enemies, or Albert Coates in his suite at the Metropole, lying in bed beneath a rubber-tree and offering all comers a glass of Caucasian wine. Plays, operas, concerts, and ballets filled the evenings; I came to know the subterranean labyrinths of the Bolshoy Theatre, with their refreshment counters for tea and cakes, as well as those of the Queen's Hall. In the audiences, the women wore home-made frocks of a pattern two years old, over which, if pretending to elegance, they draped silk shawls. Among the men, the high boots and blouses that were the rule three years ago had been displaced by nondescript lounge-suits of dungaree cut and hue and by collar and tie. The proletariat is becoming bourgeois—but how bourgeois I realised only on learning that the sole industrial undertaking of the Five-Year Plan whose output is so far up to schedule is the Leningrad spat factory.

One Saturday night we drove to the Dragomilov-sky Church in the suburbs, where a crowd of two thousand had assembled to hear the singing. As an antidote, next day I sought the Anti-God Museum, where photographs of Sir Henri Deterding, the Pope, and an Oxford friend cranking up a lorry during the General Strike, typified the forces of reaction. I visited the Kremlin, saw the superb collection of

MOSCOW

Elizabethan and Jacobean silver, and an English coach of 1625 covered with velvet, the vestments brought from Constantinople by the Metropolitan Photios in 1414, the ivory throne that came from Italy with Sophia Palaeologina when she espoused the Tsar Ivan III in 1467, the countless copes of Persian and Broussa velvets, and such masterpieces of Royal taste in the twentieth century as a platinum train in an Easter egg to commemorate the opening of the Trans-Siberian Railway, or a female leg in a high-heeled shoe carved out of agate and encircled with a diamond garter. I made my way through the churches and palaces, was shown the tiny apartments, already familiar from their enlarged version on the stage, where Boris Godunov played with his children, and at length, as I passed between the sentries on my way out, all but collided with Kalinin, the President of the whole Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Finally, on my last morning in Moscow, a party assembled at the State Bank to see the Crown Jewels. Elaborate precautions were taken as we marched through the vaults. Our coats were left behind. An armed guard tramped before and behind. Eventually we reached a small room where the whole of the imperial regalia lay flashing in glass wall-cases or set out, for personal touch, on a table covered with a green cloth. Fine jewels have always excited me. But to see the crown of Catherine, a trellised bulb set with five thousand matched diamonds, supported by buttresses of matched pearls as big in diameter as a cigarette, and surmounted by a ruby the size of a pigeon's egg—to see this object, which cost £10,400,000, within an inch of my nose, almost deprived me of speech. On recovering, I turned to the table and began fingering the insignia of the Order of St. Andrew, of which the collar, composed

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

of platinum and small diamonds and made in Genoa in 1776, was of exquisite design and workmanship. The guide was droning monotonously in a corner ; the guard outside continued to stroke their revolvers ; when suddenly the lights fused and I found myself standing in total darkness with the Andreyev collar in my hand. I dropped it like a hot cinder. Angry voices sounded outside, the officials from the Foreign Office set up a clucking of disturbed hens, and a roar of laughter went up from the visitors. After a quarter of an hour, during which I was much tempted to slip an ear-ring or two into somebody else's pocket, the lights went on again. So demoralised by this time were the nerves of our guards and guides that, when I left before the others, to keep another appointment, I was allowed to wander alone and at will through vaults filled with sacks of money, till at last, unchallenged and unnoticed, I found my way out into the street.

ROBERT BYRON

AT A SPANISH PARADOR

I LEFT Caceres on Sunday morning in a fury because the hall porter of the hotel—but that is too good a name for him : he was a weedy, spidery, hairy individual, who sat on the doorstep with a cigarette stuck to his lip, a man who had not seen soap, water, or razor for weeks—because this fellow accused me of running away without paying my bill. My flood of anger brought down a mass of eloquence with it : I do not recollect ever having had such a mastery of the Spanish tongue as I had at that moment. Subtle idioms and distinguished oaths poured from me. Skilfully, like a canoe, my tongue passed over the deeps and rapids of the majestic

AT A SPANISH PARADOR

Castilian language. That moment of complete mastery was elating and magnificent. I marched into the streets triumphantly.

The stares of the populace did not worry me ; if I had left in a pretty equable temper, I should have cringed before their gazes. The sight of a man in old tweeds and carrying a pack is enough to set a Spanish town agog for a week. On one occasion in the Asturias some friends and I were escorted into the town of Llanes by a mob of fifty yelling children and grown-ups who did not hesitate to throw stones at us and batter at the hotel door with sticks. In Spain one cultivates insensibility. One stares. One stares at men and women. Above all one disregards the feelings of women for they are there to be stared at, and they enjoy it. As I marched out of Cáceres in my anger, I gave back stare for stare, with all the contempt of the midlands and the south, East Anglia, and the Welsh mountains, Cornwall and the two bitter parts of Ireland in my eyes. At the end of the town I was stopped by two Guardias Civiles, handsome men in green, yellow, and red uniforms, the finest corps of gendarmerie in Europe.

I expected to be asked for my papers and to undergo a cross-examination. But the truth is the life of a Guardia Civil is a lonely one, and the poor men who police those deserted roads want some one to talk to ; the Guardias wanted to know :

Was I the German who, according to the papers, was staying in Cáceres and was walking round the world for a prize ? They insisted that I must be that German. That I must be walking for a prize. For what other reasons could a man walk ? Innocent smiles passed over the Guardias' faces like wind over golden corn. I said, to convince them, I would show them my passport, but they restrained me with the greatest courtesy.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

"No!" they said, "why should we wish to see your passport, for you are obviously a man of means and leisure who goes as he pleases, and not one of these begging malefactors."

Ah, ha! thought I. Tell that to your pernicious, hairy, dirty, old spidery porter in the town.

My virtue thus publicly proclaimed by the police—for we were standing at a cross-roads and a little crowd had begun to gather—I continued my march, descending a long avenue hill of eucalyptus from the town and making hour by hour across a plain, flat as a table, pale, wide, and limpid as a sea in a rippleless dawn merging into liquid blue of the horizon mountains. White farms were dotted at great distances apart. Besides the eucalyptus avenue under which the warm road lay, there was not a tree to be seen within twenty miles or more. Portugal to the west, the rising interior of Spain to the east, as far as the eye could see the lucid plain lay still under the ascending ball of the yellow sun. The sky was high, wall-less air. Never had it been wider, more inexpressibly far above me. I was breathing and drinking that miracle of sapphire, living and walking in it. I lost all sense of my body, became an ecstatic mind. The air was light as though it were being breathed down from the windows of those cool palaces whence the winds are fancifully trumpeted. As I walked singing I became aware of blue shapes of air, mountains, snow tongued, to the north. The first sight of the Gredos, so far and unnatural that they might have been no more than the grouping white smoke of a bush fire in the plain.

Preparing for the north, the cornland dropped away and the ground rose into a rocky plateau of veldt, poor pasturage for sheep and goats and herds of black pigs. The earth was tumbled with great rocks, rising to higher, darker bastions on the near

AT A SPANISH PARADOR

horizon, where, after a dramatic break at a jagged indigo wall, they rose more wildly, romantically again in golden madder, tossing and crawling like purple flame. Beneath the nearer height flowed the Tagus. Having breathed the infinite, I vowed to cross the Tagus that day. But what finite things our infinites are, our pretty little infinites! The rocks now whelmed to the road and shut out all great distances, mounds and hills of rock, brown coarse lumps emptied pell-mell over the scanty earth, and the white sheep-tracks, starved and shrivelled tendons among them. The heat began to strike like the long hammers of a million stone-breakers upon the rocks. Hunger began to claw, and it is difficult to envisage the infinite on an empty stomach. I damned that road. I could see it curled like a bleached serpent skeleton among that endless panorama of agglomerated rock. At last I saw two trees some miles away, and a white house. A Parador.

I dropped on to a stool in the Parador after an hour. It was a white one-story building on the road, with a wide archway propped up by tree trunks, and a roof of new red tiles. It was built of big lumps of that awful rock and was whitewashed. There was a small counter and two benches. Nothing more. And the house was open to the road, for it had no door.

One's first step in a Spanish inn, after saluting the people of the house, is towards the water-jar, a large earthenware jug standing in a corner with a dipper on top of it. There every one goes to drink and says, "What good water this is." And it is good water. There is no purer, more lyrical water than the water which falls out of the sky of Spain. The Spaniard is no great wine drinker. He is a frugal man—the closeness of even the wealthy Andalusians is proverbial—and on the central tableland of the Castiles, his spirit has the arctic hardness of his land, frugal

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

with his ha'pennies—he reckons all his accounts in ha'pennies—with his bread, his wine. His religion is the melancholy mysticism of the half-starved ; his dignity, the dignity of a nobleman driven to provide only for his barest daily needs. Eat to-day and let to-morrow take care of itself. *Pan y toros y mañana sera otra dia.*

No man tramping the roads of those yellow and sepia tablelands under the sun, and in that fine, high air, wants to dry up his parched throat with Spanish wine, which is as tart as vinegar anyway, or to add the lead of alcohol to his limbs.

There is a strengthening harshness in the coarse blood of the vine, but I desire the silver blood of the earth. The water that descends from the heaven in swishing downpour and blends its life with the soil, that brings body to the lakes and eternal being to the rivers, a thread of which can split a mountain, a flood of which can devour a city, a fount of which cries beading into its pool like a lark, which in a month mists hedge and tree with the emerald of spring—that water is good enough, perhaps it is too good for me.

At this little white Parador I could get no more to eat than I ever got : two eggs fried in olive oil—ya ! the green stench of it—bread so old and hard that on one loaf I broke my penknife ; and a bit of white cheese made with water and quite tasteless. Menu for a twenty-five miles' march : two hard-boiled eggs—coffee and bread if I were in town, neither if in a roadside Parador—at 7 30 A.M. ; two eggs fried in oil, and bread for lunch at 1 ; two eggs fried in oil, and bread for dinner at 9 P.M., and perhaps a chunk of chorizo hard as timber. In the end a man lives and sleeps in olive oil.

There were two hungry men putting down a new stone floor to the Parador. They crawled about the

AT A SPANISH PARADOR

place in their floppy corduroys and canvas slippers, hot, brown, and beardy creatures who stopped every few minutes to wonder "if it is the hour yet," and to make another cigarette. At last they laid down their tools and talked to me, and one of them told me he had known a most beautiful girl who was the daughter of a man they called the "ingles"—the Englishman—a glazier, that is, a maker of glass, he said, who lived in the province of Toledo.

"And," said he with great earnestness and fire, "I would have married her. I would have married her but for the fact that I didn't, and found myself married to some one else, the daughter of a tanner in Casar de Caceres, and now I have two children and hope to have more. Now," said he, "does one eat well in your country?"

It is the perpetual question of hungering Spain. "Does one eat well?"

"Ay," shouted the other plasterer. "Is it the hour yet?"

"No," said the woman of the inn, firmly. "The master has not yet come in"

They scowled at her. They glowered like two wild beasts, with the mortar wiped on their faces and their hair hanging down into their eyes, from kneeling on the floor.

"I'll tell you where to stay in Plasencia if you want a Venta or a good Parador there," said one. "If you go to the Sevillano you will pay more and get a lot of courses. But at the Paraiso you will pay less. You will not get so many courses, but they will pile up your plate so high that in the end you will eat just as well. At the Paraiso one eats, man. One eats!"

"One eats! Yes!" shouted the other plasterer, the wilder of the two, who slouched about with his hands in his pockets, sultry eyes in storm. "That's what a married man doesn't do. But a single man,

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

yes. He comes and goes where he likes, he keeps all his money to himself. Can eat and drink how much he likes. If I had wanted I could chuck this game now and be off on the road with you anywhere, Madrid, France. It doesn't matter where."

"I wouldn't," said the other plasterer, taking a glass of wine from the counter while the woman was out of the room; "I'd stay here. There is no place in the world better than a man's own land."

"Phaugh!" cried the other scornfully, and spat through the doorway at least ten yards, and stared calculatingly at the mark.

The master came in, a tall, old, flaccid man, with a stomach that was doubled in appearance by the wearing of a huge blue sash, out of which he pulled a hammer and a loaf of bread

"It is the hour?" cried the two plasterers jumping up from the floor like two mastiffs almost with anxious tears in their eyes

"It is only twelve. Get on with it," said he.

"It is one The Englishman says so," cried the plasterers.

"It is twelve by the old time."

"But it is one by the new."

"I engaged you by the old"

"Ay, man," shouted the hungry ones. "Hombre! You engaged us by the new and make us work to the old. The old uncle!"

They flung down their tools in protest.

An argument of arms, hair, eyes, teeth, bodies, followed. The master took no notice, and walked off with his hammer. They stared at each other in hate.

"Ay, madre mia! Barbarity. What a man! What a brute! What an atrocity!" they cried at each other. Sighing, they flopped to the ground and sitting back against the wall, tightened their belts and rolled cigarettes.

MYSTICAL NATURE OF THE PASSPORT

"It will look well this floor," said the one plasterer, looking affectionately at it.

"Yes—when it is finished," said the other, smiling tenderly and half-closing his eyes as he tried in vain to visualise that remote unheard-of day.

V. S. PRITCHETT

ON THE MYSTICAL NATURE OF THE PASSPORT

My passport ! Precious, expensive, distinguished talisman ! Distinguished—yes ; for look, see what it says :—

"We, Sir Joseph Austen Chamberlain, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, a Member of His Britannic Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, a Member of Parliament, &c., &c., &c., His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, request and require in the name of His Majesty all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford him every assistance or protection of which he may stand in need."

What fine language ! How generous a recommendation ! Not merely am I to be permitted to pass freely without let or hindrance, I am to have *every* assistance or protection of which I may stand in need. All this in the name of His Majesty—and addressed with noble confidence to all the strangers in the world. No doubt if I show this appeal in the shops of Italy the warm-hearted people will cash my cheques or let me run up a bill.

And it is not everybody's passport. It is *mine*. It was granted to His Majesty's trusty and (I presume) well-beloved Albert Haddock as a special mark of

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

His Majesty's esteem and favour. See, here is Haddock's own photograph. He looks, it is true, rather like a depressed Czecho-Slovakian many years older ; but still there is a rough resemblance to the original. And no other man may present this document to a foreign prince and hope to be permitted to pass freely. That is the big thing. I forget now precisely what I did to earn this proof of His Majesty's esteem and favour. But my recollection is that I got a barrister, whom I had not met before, to sign a document saying that I was a "fit and proper person" to hold a passport—or, in other words, to be permitted to pass freely without let or hindrance.

In these days of international amity and dwindling trade, one would say, the more people pass freely the better. Indeed it is surprising that in this cultivated era, at the peak of civilisation, a passport should be necessary at all. It belongs to a wilder day, when pirate and peril awaited the innocent traveller. So one would say. And one would be very wrong.

Which brings us back to the old but important truth that the passport has changed its character. It is not designed to make things easy for those who wish to move but for those who wish to stop them. It is no longer a talisman but a ticket—a ticket such as is worn by cattle as they travel to the show. And on the ticket is written : "This beast, so far as we know, has not got foot-and-mouth disease ; but have a good look at him—you never can tell."

The change may be necessary and proper in these difficult days. But I suggest that the wording should now be altered to fit the true character of the thing. It should run thus :—

"We, ———, a Member of His Britannic Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, regard the bearer with the gravest suspicion. He wishes to

MYSTICAL NATURE OF THE PASSPORT

travel, we cannot imagine why, but we can discover no particular reason why he should not, and, since he has paid his money, we commend him vaguely to you in the name of His Majesty. So far as we know he has no criminal or revolutionary intention : but do not scruple to suspect and hamper him as you feel disposed, and in particular we request and require that you will make him attend in the ship's smoking-room to have his passport stamped at 7 A.M. or earlier at every port of call, for this annoys him and contributes greatly to the discouragement of foreign travel, which is a nuisance to us all."

However, here is my passport. Or rather, it is not here For the Purser has it. And this is an odd thing.

As I pass about the ocean I note with interest the various degrees of importance which the nations attach to my passport. At Gibraltar I might land for lunch without showing it to anyone—very properly, for was I not a British subject landing on a British Rock? Yet the said Rock is a fortress, and at the moment is adjacent to an area of hostilities. I might have had designs on the batteries, or the garrison, or His Majesty's ships. I might have intended to join General Franco's forces

At Toulon also, a foreign naval port, nobody wanted to see my passport, though I spent twelve hours in the town. The French were as trustful about me as the British.

But at Naples—no. Every passenger who goes ashore must show his passport. Or rather he must show a card which shows that he has, or did have, a passport And here is another odd thing.

Long before we reach Naples the Purser's department (at the request of Naples) starts "getting in the passports." There are hints, cajoleries, messages,

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

threats. At last each passenger unlocks and surrenders the precious document, and receives a "receipt-card" in exchange. The passports are in pawn till after Naples.

One feels naked and, if a true Briton, resentful. It is *my* passport and I do not think that even my good friend the Purser should deprive me of it at the bidding of a foreign Power. Suppose that at this point the ship foundered and I swam to the nearest shore or landed in a boat, the first thing that the inhabitants of that shore would say would be, "Where is your passport?" For all nations have now developed the habit of asking this absurd question. And I should be able to say only this: "I did have a passport. At great trouble and expense I acquired a passport. But the Purser took it away from me because the Italian authorities at Naples request him to do that. However, I have here a small receipt-card which he gave me in exchange."

Yes, the Italian authorities will have it this way, for reasons which, I presume, seem good to them, though not to me. And the ship, I believe, has to give a written guarantee that *all* the passports have been duly confiscated and locked up. Then, if one wants to go ashore and have lunch at Naples, one must get up before breakfast and have the receipt-card stamped by the police, in the smoking-room. The officials arrive early (in very large numbers) and go away early; and if one fails to get one's card stamped before they go one is imprisoned in the ship till she sails.

It all sounded highly authoritarian and efficient; I dutifully got my receipt-card stamped before breakfast and was free to land for lunch.

The police, observe, did not see my passport. They saw the receipt-card only. And this, I suppose,

MYSTICAL NATURE OF THE PASSPORT

persuaded them that I was a fit and proper person to pass freely about Naples. But, for all they know, the passport which the Purser has locked up in the office is not my passport at all and has someone else's photograph upon it. I may be a Communist carrying Mr. Eden's passport, stolen. They have no real assurance that I shall not leave a bomb at Pompeii or say subversive things in the restaurant.

By the way, now that I come to think of it, not even the Purser knows whether my passport is my passport, genuine and up-to-date. He has simply assured himself, for the convenience of myself and the ship, that I have *a* passport. He has not compared the face with the photograph, and, for all he knows, the face may belong to a Presbyterian minister and I may belong to the Anarchists

Passportery, in fact, has become a kind of children's game It is like playing "shop" with imaginary money. The passport is a token, a counter, a tiddley-wink. And now we have gone one stage farther in the mystical business. Listen.

My friend, Mr. Clifford, wanted to come ashore and lunch with me. But he had not had his receipt-card stamped. His passport was locked up in the Purser's office, and the Purser was not permitted to give it to him. He could not go ashore. But *Mr. Smith*, who had had his receipt-card stamped, did not want to go ashore; so Mr. Clifford borrowed Mr. Smith's receipt-card and, thus armed, passed freely ashore without let or hindrance—not, that is, with his own precious passport, not even with evidence that he possessed a passport, but with a card showing that *Mr. Smith* possessed a passport

Well, we had our lunch, totalitarian efficiency was demonstrated once more, and no harm was done. But the careful reader will observe that all this is grossly contrary to the true principles of passportery,

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

and might be highly unsatisfactory to the traveller. The cautious passenger, if he goes ashore for a few hours only at a place like Naples, will take his passport with him. He may be run over by a taxi, faint in the sun, become involved in a brawl, or lose his memory, so that the ship goes without him. His passport will then at least establish his identity, and the request of the Foreign Secretary in His Majesty's name may commend him to the stranger. It is for such emergencies that the passport is designed. But in Naples the British passenger "in transit" *is not allowed to carry his own passport* (I put this, appropriately, in italics), and if he is run over may only wave a receipt-card. This does not strike me as being highly international or respectful to His Majesty. What it comes to is this, that without having committed any offence, one is deprived of His Britannic Majesty's passport by a foreign Power.

The idea, I am told, is that if, after my lunch, I decide to stay in Italy, I shall be in a hole, because I have not my passport: and this will compel me to return to the ship and go away. But, put like that, it does not sound much better. Well, well, well—what are we coming to?

A. P. HERBERT

FICTION

THE VERGER

THERE had been a christening that afternoon at St. Peter's, Neville Square, and Albert Edward Foreman still wore his vergers' gown. He kept his new one, its folds as full and stiff as though it were made not of alpaca but of perennial bronze, for funerals and weddings (St. Peter's, Neville Square, was a church much favoured by the fashionable for these ceremonies) and now he wore only his second-best. He wore it with complacency, for it was the dignified symbol of his office, and without it (when he took it off to go home) he had the disconcerting sensation of being somewhat insufficiently clad. He took pains with it; he pressed it and ironed it himself. During the sixteen years he had been vergers of this church he had had a succession of such gowns, but he had never been able to throw them away when they were worn out, and the complete series, neatly wrapped up in brown paper, lay in the bottom drawer of the wardrobe in his bedroom.

The vergers busied himself quietly, replacing the painted wooden cover on the marble font, taking away a chair that had been brought for an infirm old lady, and waited for the vicar to have finished in the vestry so that he could tidy up in there and go home. Presently he saw him walk across the chancel, genuflect in front of the high altar and come down the aisle; but he still wore his cassock.

"What's he 'anging about for?" the vergers said to himself. "Don't 'e know I want my tea?"

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

The vicar had been but recently appointed, a red-faced energetic man in the early forties, and Albert Edward still regretted his predecessor, a clergyman of the old school who preached leisurely sermons in a silvery voice and dined out a great deal with his more aristocratic parishioners. He liked things in church to be just so, but he never fussed; he was not like this new man who wanted to have his finger in every pie. But Albert Edward was tolerant. St. Peter's was in a very good neighbourhood and the parishioners were a very nice class of people. The new vicar had come from the East End and he couldn't be expected to fall in all at once with the discreet ways of his fashionable congregation.

"All this 'ustle," said Albert Edward. "But give 'im time, he'll learn."

When the vicar had walked down the aisle so far that he could address the vergers without raising his voice more than was becoming in a place of worship he stopped.

"Foreman, will you come into the vestry for a minute. I have something to say to you."

"Very good, sir."

The vicar waited for him to come up and they walked up the church together.

"A very nice christening, I thought, sir. Funny 'ow the baby stopped 'cryin' the moment you took him."

"I've noticed they very often do," said the vicar, with a little smile. "After all I've had a good deal of practice with them."

It was a source of subdued pride to him that he could nearly always quiet a whimpering infant by the manner in which he held it, and he was not unconscious of the amused admiration with which mothers and nurses watched him settle the baby

THE VERGER

in the crook of his surpliced arm. The verger knew that it pleased him to be complimented on his talent.

The vicar preceded Albert Edward into the vestry. Albert Edward was a trifle surprised to find the two churchwardens there. He had not seen them come in. They gave him pleasant nods

"Good afternoon, my lord. Good afternoon, sir," he said to one after the other.

They were elderly men, both of them, and they had been churchwardens almost as long as Albert Edward had been verger. They were sitting now at a handsome refectory table that the old vicar had brought many years before from Italy and the vicar sat down in the vacant chair between them. Albert Edward faced them, the table between him and them, and wondered with slight uneasiness what was the matter. He remembered still the occasion on which the organist had got into trouble and the bother they had all had to hush things up. In a church like St. Peter's, Neville Square, they couldn't afford a scandal. On the vicar's red face was a look of resolute benignity, but the others bore an expression that was slightly troubled.

"He's been naggin' them, he 'as," said the verger to himself. "He's jockeyed them into doin' something, but they don't 'alf like it. That's what it is, you mark my words."

But his thoughts did not appear on Albert Edward's clean-cut and distinguished features. He stood in a respectful but not obsequious attitude. He had been in service before he was appointed to his ecclesiastical office, but only in very good houses, and his deportment was irreproachable. Starting as a page-boy in the household of a merchant-prince, he had risen by due degrees from the position of fourth to first footman, for a year he had been

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

single-handed butler to a widowed peeress and till the vacancy occurred at St. Peter's, butler with two men under him in the house of a retired ambassador. He was tall, spare, grave, and dignified. He looked, if not like a duke, at least like an actor of the old school who specialised in dukes' parts. He had tact, firmness, and self-assurance. His character was unimpeachable.

The vicar began briskly.

"Foreman, we've got something rather unpleasant to say to you. You've been here a great many years and I think his lordship and the general agree with me that you've fulfilled the duties of your office to the satisfaction of everybody concerned."

The two churchwardens nodded.

"But a most extraordinary circumstance came to my knowledge the other day and I felt it my duty to impart it to the churchwardens. I discovered to my astonishment that you could neither read nor write."

The verger's face betrayed no sign of embarrassment.

"The last vicar knew that, sir," he replied. "He said it didn't make no difference. He always said there was a great deal too much education in the world for 'is taste."

"It's the most amazing thing I ever heard," cried the general. "Do you mean to say that you've been verger of this church for sixteen years and never learned to read or write?"

"I went into service when I was twelve, sir. The cook in the first place tried to teach me once, but I didn't seem to 'ave the knack for it, and then what with one thing and another I never seemed to 'ave the time. I've never really found the want of it. I think a lot of these young fellows waste a rare lot of time readin' when they might be doin' something useful."

THE VERGER

"But don't you want to know the news?" said the other churchwarden. "Don't you ever want to write a letter?"

"No, me lord, I seem to manage very well without. And of late years now they've all these pictures in the papers I get to know what's goin' on pretty well. Me wife's quite a scholar and if I want to write a letter she writes it for me. It's not as if I was a bettin' man."

The two churchwardens gave the vicar a troubled glance and then looked down at the table.

"Well, Foreman, I've talked the matter over with these gentlemen and they quite agree with me that the situation is impossible. At a church like St. Peter's, Neville Square, we cannot have a vergers who can neither read nor write."

Albert Edward's thin, sallow face reddened and he moved uneasily on his feet, but he made no reply.

"Understand me, Foreman, I have no complaint to make against you. You do your work quite satisfactorily; I have the highest opinion both of your character and of your capacity; but we haven't the right to take the risk of some accident that might happen owing to your lamentable ignorance. It's a matter of prudence as well as of principle."

"But couldn't you learn, Foreman?" asked the general

"No, sir, I'm afraid I couldn't, not now. You see I'm not as young as I was and if I couldn't seem able to get the letters in me 'ead when I was a nipper I don't think there's much chance of it now."

"We don't want to be harsh with you, Foreman," said the vicar. "But the churchwardens and I have quite made up our minds. We'll give you three months and if at the end of that time you cannot read and write I'm afraid you'll have to go."

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Albert Edward had never liked the new vicar. He'd said from the beginning that they'd made a mistake when they gave him St. Peter's. He wasn't the type of man they wanted with a classy congregation like that. And now he straightened himself a little. He knew his value and he wasn't going to allow himself to be put upon.

"I'm very sorry, sir, I'm afraid it's no good. I'm too old a dog to learn new tricks. I've lived a good many years without knowin' 'ow to read and write and without wishin' to praise myself, self-praise is no recommendation, I don't mind sayin' I've done my duty in that state of life in which it 'as pleased a merciful providence to place me, and if I *could* learn now I don't know as I'd want to."

"In that case, Foreman, I'm afraid you must go."

"Yes, sir, I quite understand. I shall be 'appy to 'and in my resignation as soon as you've found somebody to take my place."

But when Albert Edward with his usual politeness had closed the church door behind the vicar and the two churchwardens he could not sustain the air of unruffled dignity with which he had borne the blow inflicted upon him and his lips quivered. He walked slowly back to the vestry and hung up on its proper peg his verger's gown. He sighed as he thought of all the grand funerals and smart weddings it had seen. He tidied everything up, put on his coat, and hat in hand walked down the aisle. He locked the church door behind him. He strolled across the square, but deep in his sad thoughts he did not take the street that led him home, where a nice strong cup of tea awaited him; he took the wrong turning. He walked slowly along. His heart was heavy. He did not know what he should do with himself. He did not fancy the notion of going back to domestic

THE VERGER

service ; after being his own master for so many years, for the vicar and churchwardens could say what they liked, it was he that had run St. Peter's, Neville Square, he could scarcely demean himself by accepting a situation. He had saved a tidy sum, but not enough to live on without doing something, and life seemed to cost more every year. He had never thought to be troubled with such questions. The vergers of St. Peter's, like the popes of Rome, were there for life. He had often thought of the pleasant reference the vicar would make in his sermon at evensong the first Sunday after his death to the long and faithful service and the exemplary character of their late verger, Albert Edward Foreman. He sighed deeply. Albert Edward was a non-smoker and a total abstainer, but with a certain latitude ; that is to say, he liked a glass of beer with his dinner and when he was tired he enjoyed a cigarette. It occurred to him now that one would comfort him, and since he did not carry them he looked about him for a shop where he could buy a packet of Gold Flakes. He did not at once see one and walked on a little. It was a long street, with all sorts of shops in it, but there was not a single one where you could buy cigarettes.

"That's strange," said Albert Edward.

To make sure he walked right up the street again. No, there was no doubt about it. He stopped and looked reflectively up and down.

"I can't be the only man as walks along this street and wants a fag," he said. "I shouldn't wonder but what a fellow might do very well with a little shop here. Tobacco and sweets, you know."

He gave a sudden start.

"That's an idea," he said. "Strange 'ow things come to you when you least expect it."

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

He turned, walked home, and had his tea.

"You're very silent this afternoon, Albert," his wife remarked.

"I'm thinkin'," he said.

He considered the matter from every point of view and next day he went along the street and by good luck found a little shop to let that looked as though it would exactly suit him. Twenty-four hours later he had taken it, and when a month after that he left St. Peter's, Neville Square, for ever, Albert Edward Foreman set up in business as a tobacconist and newsagent. His wife said it was a dreadful come-down after being verger of St. Peter's, but he answered that you had to move with the times, the church wasn't what it was, and 'ence-forward he was going to render unto Caesar what was Caesar's. Albert Edward did very well. He did so well that in a year or so it struck him that he might take a second shop and put a manager in. He looked for another long street that hadn't got a tobacconist in it and when he found it, and a shop to let, took it and stocked it. This was a success too. Then it occurred to him that if he could run two he could run half a dozen, so he began walking about London, and whenever he found a long street that had no tobacconist and a shop to let he took it. In the course of ten years he had acquired no less than ten shops and he was making money hand over fist. He went round to all of them himself every Monday, collected the week's takings, and took them to the bank.

One morning when he was there paying in a bundle of notes and a heavy bag of silver the cashier told him that the manager would like to see him. He was shown into an office and the manager shook hands with him.

"Mr Foreman, I wanted to have a talk with you

THE VERGER

about the money you've got on deposit with us. D'you know exactly how much it is? "

"Not within a pound or two, sir; but I've got a pretty rough idea."

"Apart from what you paid in this morning it's a little over thirty thousand pounds. That's a very large sum to have on deposit and I should have thought you'd do better to invest it."

"I wouldn't want to take no risk, sir. I know it's safe in the bank "

"You needn't have the least anxiety. We'll make you out a list of absolutely gilt-edged securities. They'll bring you in a better rate of interest than we can possibly afford to give you."

A troubled look settled on Mr Foreman's distinguished face. "I've never 'ad anything to do with stocks and shares and I'd 'ave to leave it all in your 'ands," he said.

The manager smiled. "We'll do everything. All you'll have to do next time you come in is just to sign the transfers."

"I could do that all right," said Albert uncertainly. "But 'ow should I know what I was signin'?"

"I suppose you can read," said the manager a trifle sharply.

Mr Foreman gave him a disarming smile.

"Well, sir, that's just it. I can't I know it sounds funny like, but there it is, I can't read or write, only me name, an' I only learnt to do that when I went into business "

The manager was so surprised that he jumped up from his chair.

"That's the most extraordinary thing I ever heard."

"You see, it's like this, sir, I never 'ad the opportunity until it was too late and then some'ow I wouldn't. I got obstinate like."

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

The manager stared at him as though he were a prehistoric monster.

"And do you mean to say that you've built up this important business and amassed a fortune of thirty thousand pounds without being able to read or write? Good God, man, what would you be now if you had been able to?"

"I can tell you that, sir," said Mr. Foreman, a little smile on his still aristocratic features. "I'd be verger of St. Peter's, Neville Square."

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

THE HIGH LAMA

THERE had been a pause, imposed by the High Lama's call for further refreshment; Conway did not wonder at it, for the strain of such a long recital must have been considerable. Nor was he himself ungrateful for the respite. He felt that the interval was as desirable from an artistic as from any other point of view, and that the bowls of tea, with their accompaniment of conventionally improvised courtesies, fulfilled the same function as a *cadenza* in music. This reflection brought out (unless it were mere coincidence) an odd example of the High Lama's telepathic powers, for he immediately began to talk about music and to express pleasure that Conway's taste in that direction had not been entirely unsatisfied at Shangri-La. Conway answered with suitable politeness and added that he had been surprised to find the lamasery in possession of such a complete library of European composers. The compliment was acknowledged between slow sips of tea. "Ah, my dear Conway, we are fortunate in that one of our number is a gifted musician—he was, indeed, a pupil of Chopin's—and we have been

THE HIGH LAMA

happy to place in his hands the entire management of our salon. You must certainly meet him."

"I should like to. Chang, by the way, was telling me that your favourite Western composer is Mozart."

"That is so," came the reply. "Mozart has an austere elegance which we find very satisfying. He builds a house which is neither too big nor too little, and he furnishes it in perfect taste."

The exchange of comments continued until the tea-bowls were taken away; by that time Conway was able to remark quite calmly: "So, to resume our earlier discussion, you intend to keep us? That, I take it, is the important and invariable proviso?"

"You have guessed correctly, my son."

"And we are really to stay here for ever?"

"I should greatly prefer to employ your excellent English idiom and say that we are all of us here 'for good.'"

"What puzzles me is why we four, out of all the rest of the world's inhabitants, should have been chosen."

Relapsing into his earlier and more consequential manner, the High Lama responded: "It is an intricate story, if you would care to hear it. You must know that we have always aimed, as far as possible, to keep our numbers in fairly constant recruitment—since, apart from any other reasons, it is pleasant to have with us people of various ages and representative of different periods. Unfortunately, since the recent European War and the Russian Revolution, travel and exploration in Tibet have been almost completely held up; in fact, our last visitor, a Japanese, arrived in 1912, and was not, to be candid, a very valuable acquisition. You see, my dear Conway, we are not quacks or charlatans; we do not and cannot guarantee success; some of our visitors derive no benefit at all from their stay

here ; others merely live to what might be called a normally advanced age and then die from some trifling ailment. In general we have found that Tibetans, owing to their being inured to both the altitude and other conditions, are much less sensitive than outside races ; they are charming people, and we have admitted many of them, but I doubt if more than a few will pass their hundredth year. The Chinese are a little better, but even among them we have a high percentage of failures. Our best subjects, undoubtedly, are the Nordic and Latin races of Europe ; perhaps the Americans would be equally adaptable, and I count it our great good fortune that we have at last, in the person of one of your companions, secured a citizen of that nation. But I must continue with the answer to your question. The position was, as I have been explaining, that for nearly two decades we had welcomed no new-comers, and as there had been several deaths during that period, a problem was beginning to arise. A few years ago, however, one of our number came to the rescue with a novel idea ; he was a young fellow, a native of our valley, absolutely trustworthy and in fullest sympathy with our aims ; but, like all the valley people, he was denied by nature the chance that comes more fortunately to those from a distance. It was he who suggested that he should leave us, make his way to some surrounding country, and bring us additional colleagues by a method which would have been impossible in an earlier age. It was in many respects a revolutionary proposal, but we gave our consent, after due consideration. For we must move with the times, you know, even at Shangri-La."

"You mean that he was sent out deliberately to bring someone back by air ?"

"Well, you see, he was an exceedingly gifted and

THE HIGH LAMA

resourceful youth, and we had great confidence in him. It was his own idea, and we allowed him a free hand in carrying it out. All we knew definitely was that the first stage of his plan included a period of tuition at an American flying-school."

"But how could he manage the rest of it? It was only by chance that there happened to be that aeroplane at Baskul——"

"True, my dear Conway—many things are by chance. But it happened, after all, to be just the chance that Talu was looking for. Had he not found it, there might have been another chance in a year or two—or perhaps, of course, none at all. I confess I was surprised when our sentinels gave news of his descent on the plateau. The progress of aviation is rapid, but it had seemed likely to me that much more time would elapse before an average machine could make such a crossing of the mountains"

"It wasn't an average machine. It was a rather special one, made for mountain-flying."

"Again by chance? Our young friend was indeed fortunate. It is a pity that we cannot discuss the matter with him—we were all grieved at his death. You would have liked him, Conway."

Conway nodded slightly; he felt it very possible. He said, after a silence: "But what's the idea behind it all?"

"My son, your way of asking that question gives me infinite pleasure. In the course of a somewhat long experience it has never before been put to me in tones of such calmness. My revelation has been greeted in almost every conceivable manner—with indignation, distress, fury, disbelief, and hysteria—but never until this night with mere interest. It is, however, an attitude that I most cordially welcome. To-day you are interested; to-morrow you will feel

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

concern ; eventually, it may be, we shall claim your devotion."

"That is more than I should care to promise"

"Your very doubt pleases me—it is the basis of profound and significant faith. . . . But let us not argue. You are interested, and that, from you, is much. All I ask in addition is that what I tell you now shall remain, for the present, unknown to your three companions."

Conway was silent.

"The time will come when they will learn, like you, but that moment, for their own sakes, had better not be hastened. I am so certain of your wisdom in this matter that I do not ask for a promise ; you will act, I know, as we both think best. . . . Now let me begin by sketching for you a very agreeable picture. You are still, I should say, a youngish man by the world's standards ; your life, as people say, lies ahead of you ; in the normal course you might expect twenty or thirty years of only slightly and gradually diminishing activity. By no means a cheerless prospect, and I can hardly expect you to see it as I do—as a slender, breathless, and far too frantic interlude. The first quarter-century of your life was doubtless lived under the cloud of being too young for things, while the last quarter-century would normally be shadowed by the still darker cloud of being too old for them ; and between those two clouds, what small and narrow sunlight illumines a human lifetime ! But you, it may be, are destined to be more fortunate, since by the standards of Shangri-La your sunlit years have scarcely yet begun. It will happen, perhaps, that decades hence you will feel no older than you are to-day—you may preserve, as Henschell did, a long and wondrous youth. But that, believe me, is only an early and superficial phase. There will come a time when you will age like others,

THE HIGH LAMA

though far more slowly, and into a condition infinitely nobler ; at eighty you may still climb to the pass with a young man's gait, but at twice that age you must not expect the whole marvel to have persisted. We are not workers of miracles ; we have made no conquest of death, or even of decay. All we have done and can sometimes do is to slacken the tempo of this brief interval that is called life. We do this by methods which are as simple here as they are impossible elsewhere ; but make no mistake ; the end awaits us all.

" Yet it is, nevertheless, a prospect of much charm that I unfold for you—long tranquillities during which you will observe a sunset as men in the outer world hear the striking of a clock, and with far less care. The years will come and go, and you will pass from fleshly enjoyments into austerer but no less satisfying realms ; you may lose the keenness of muscle and appetite, but there will be gain to match your loss ; you will achieve calmness and profundity, ripeness and wisdom and the clear enchantment of memory. And, most precious of all, you will have Time—that rare and lovely gift that your Western countries have lost the more they have pursued it. Think for a moment. You will have time to read—never again will you skim pages to save minutes, or avoid some study lest it prove too engrossing. You have also a taste for music—here, then, are your scores and instruments, with Time, unruffled and unmeasured, to give you their richest savour. And you are also, we will say, a man of good fellowship—does it not charm you to think of wise and serene friendships, a long and kindly traffic of the mind from which death may not call you away with his customary hurry ? Or, if it is solitude that you prefer, could you not employ our pavilions to enrich the gentleness of lonely thoughts ? "

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

The voice made a pause which Conway did not seek to fill.

"You make no comment, my dear Conway. Forgive my eloquence—I belong to an age and a nation that never considered it bad form to be articulate . . . But perhaps you are thinking of wife, parents, children, left behind in the world? Or maybe ambitions to do this or that? Believe me, though the pang may be keen at first, in a decade from now even its ghost will not haunt you. Though in point of fact, if I read your mind correctly, you have no such griefs."

Conway was startled by the accuracy of the judgment. "That's so," he replied "I'm unmarried; I have few close friends, and no ambitions."

"No ambitions? And how have you contrived to escape those widespread maladies?"

For the first time Conway felt that he was actually taking part in a conversation. He said: "It always seemed to me in my profession that a good deal of what passed for success would be rather disagreeable, apart from needing more effort than I felt called upon to make. I was in the Consular Service—quite a subordinate post, but it suited me well enough."

"Yet your soul was not in it?"

"Neither my soul nor my heart nor more than half my energies. I'm naturally rather lazy."

The wrinkles deepened and twisted till Conway realised that the High Lama was very probably smiling. "Laziness in doing certain things can be a great virtue," resumed the whisper. "In any case, you will scarcely find us exacting in such a matter. Chang, I believe, explained to you our principle of moderation, and one of the things in which we are always moderate is activity. I myself, for instance, have been able to learn ten languages; the ten might have been twenty had I worked immoderately. But

THE HIGH LAMA

I did not. And it is the same in other directions ; you will find us neither profligate nor ascetic. Until we reach an age when care is advisable, we gladly accept the pleasures of the table. All things considered, I feel sure you will get used to our ways without much effort. Chang, indeed, was very optimistic—and so, after this meeting, am I. But there is, I admit, an odd quality in you that I have never met in any of our visitors hitherto. It is not quite cynicism, still less bitterness ; perhaps it is partly disillusionment, but it is also a clarity of mind that I should not have expected in anyone younger than—say, a century or so. It is, if I had to put a single word to it, passionlessness.”

Conway answered : “ As good a word as most, no doubt. I don’t know whether you classify the people who come here, but if so, you can label me ‘1914–1918.’ That makes me, I should think, a unique specimen in your museum of antiquities—the other three who arrived along with me don’t enter the category. I used up most of my passions and energies during the years I’ve mentioned, and though I don’t talk much about it, the chief thing I’ve asked from the world since then is to leave me alone. I find in this place a certain charm and quietness that appeals to me, and no doubt, as you remark, I shall get used to things.”

“ Is that all, my son ? ”

“ I hope I am keeping well to your own rule of moderation.”

“ You are clever—as Chang told me, you are very clever. But is there nothing in the prospect I have outlined that tempts you to any stronger feeling ? ”

Conway was silent for an interval and then replied : “ I was deeply impressed by your story of the past, but to be candid, your sketch of the future interests me only in an abstract sense. I can’t look so far

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

ahead. I should certainly be sorry if I had to leave Shangri-La to-morrow, or next week, or perhaps even next year ; but how I shall feel about it if I live to be a hundred isn't a matter to prophesy. I can face it, like any other future, but in order to make me keen it must have a point. I've sometimes doubted whether life itself has any ; and if not, long life must be even more pointless."

"My friend, the traditions of this building, both Buddhist and Christian, are very reassuring."

"Maybe. But I'm afraid I still hanker after some more definite reason for envying the centenarian."

"There is a reason, and a very definite one indeed. It is the whole reason for this colony of chance-sought strangers living beyond their years. We do not follow an idle experiment, a mere whimsy. We have a dream and a vision. It is a vision that first appeared to old Perrault when he lay dying in this room in the year 1789. He looked back then on his long life, as I have already told you, and it seemed to him that all the loveliest things were transient and perishable, and that war, lust, and brutality might some day crush them until there were no more left in the world. He remembered sights he had seen with his own eyes, and with his mind he pictured others ; he saw the nations strengthening, not in wisdom, but in vulgar passions and the will to destroy ; he saw their machine power multiplying until a single weaponed man might have matched a whole army of the Grand Monarque. And he perceived that when they had filled the land and sea with ruin, they would take to the air. . . . Can you say that his vision was untrue ?"

"True indeed."

"But that was not all. He foresaw a time when men, exultant in the technique of homicide, would rage so hotly over the world that every precious thing would be in danger, every book and picture and

THE HIGH LAMA

harmony, every treasure garnered through two millenniums, the small, the delicate, the defenceless—all would be lost like the lost books of Livy, or wrecked as the English wrecked the Summer Palace in Pekin.”

“I share your opinion of that.”

“Of course. But what are the opinions of reasonable men against iron and steel? Believe me, that vision of old Perrault will come true. And that, my son, is why *I* am here, and why *you* are here, and why we may pray to outlive the doom that gathers around on every side.”

“To outlive it?”

“There is a chance. It will all come to pass before you are as old as I am.”

“And you think that Shangri-La will escape?”

“Perhaps. We may expect no mercy, but we may faintly hope for neglect. Here we shall stay with our books and our music and our meditations, conserving the frail elegancies of a dying age, and seeking such wisdom as men will need when their passions are all spent. We have a heritage to cherish and bequeath. Let us take what pleasure we may until that time comes.”

“And then?”

“Then, my son, when the strong have devoured each other, the Christian ethic may at last be fulfilled, and the meek shall inherit the earth.”

A shadow of emphasis had touched the whisper, and Conway surrendered to the beauty of it; again he felt the surge of darkness around, but now symbolically, as if the world outside were already brewing for the storm. And then he saw that the High Lama of Shangri-La was actually astir, rising from his chair, standing upright like the half-embodiment of a ghost. In mere politeness Conway made to assist; but suddenly a deeper impulse seized him, and he did

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

what he had never done to any man before ; he knelt, and hardly knew why he did.

" I understand you, Father," he said

JAMES HILTON

ORPHEUS AND HIS LUTE

Du holde Kunst . . .

" THE changes in this city—! " said the old man, and then paused as though overcome.

" What changes ? " I inquired.

" Ah, well," he concluded in a shocking anticlimax, "'tis God's holy will."

" But what are the changes ? " I persisted.

" What are the changes ? Isn't it change enough for anyone that the two things the people were fondest of under the sun, the two things they'd give body and soul for, are after falling into disrespect ? "

" And what are they ? "

" What else but porter and music ?—Sometimes it was the music got the upper hand and sometimes the porter, but the one and the other were in every bit of sport and mischief there was. Did I ever tell you the story of the Irishtown band ? "

" You did not."

" Well, now 'tis a little story worth telling, just to show you the sort of windfalls that pass for musicians nowadays. In those days—I'm speaking of fifty years ago—every parish had a band, and some had two bands and even three bands, but the Irishtown band was the best of the lot. There wasn't a man in it that wasn't born and reared as you might say between bar lines, and every one of them would drink Lough Erne dry. That was a well-known fact : a man wouldn't have a chance of being taken

ORPHEUS AND HIS LUTE

in that band unless he could do something remarkable in the way of drinking, and it used to be said of a certain notorious cadger—one, Daaza—that after a band promenade or a procession, with respects to you, he could get blind drunk on the emptying of the instruments.

“They were grand musicians—’twas given up to them—but everyone was beginning to get sick of their begging. They were for ever collecting at the chapel gates for new this and new that, and of a cold winter’s night you’d hear a knock at the door, and when you went out you’d see a couple of them outside with a collecting-box, and they not able to stop it rattling with the shivering and the lust for drink, and one of them would up and say ‘Sorry for troubling you, old flower, but ’tis the way we’re collecting for new uniforms for the band.’ Uniforms! No one ever saw tale or tidings of anything new on them, and the old rags they had, there wasn’t a vestige of a seat in them.

“You wouldn’t remember it, but in those days it was the fashion for bands to serenade supporters of their own—Aldermen or M P’s or big butter merchants—more particularly when they were giving dinner-parties, and when dinner was over the man of the house would come out and slip the bandmaster ten shillings or a pound to get drinks for the men. But in the latter end no one would open his doors to the Irishtown band, for as sure as they got any sort of an innings, they’d be up week after week and night after night, puffing and blowing outside, and midnight wouldn’t see a sign of staggering or giving out in them till they got the price of a wet. And that was the rock they perished on, for one by one they lost their backers, and towards the end even the dirtiest old ward politician wouldn’t have the nerve to give them a show.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

"Well, one cold wet night in February they all gathered in for a practice. Practice, my eye! Damn the bit of practice they were fit for, any of them! They sat down round the fire, the whole lot, in the jim-jams, and 'twas two fellows called Butty Bowman and Ned Hegarty that weren't as bad as the rest that were lighting the pipes for them. That much they couldn't do for the jugs in their hands, and whenever the door opened or a cinder fell out of the fire, the whole lot would give one loud shriek and rise three feet in the air, chairs and all.

"'Boys, boys,' says the bandmaster, trembling and rubbing his hands, 'what in the name of the sweet and suffering God are we going to do this night?'

"'Send out the conjuring-box quick!' says Shinkwin, the big drummer.

"'But who will we send it to?'

"'Send it to the pubs. Crowley's at the bridge ought to be good for a bob.'

"'Here, Hegarty,' says the bandmaster, 'take a turn at it you now, yourself and Butty Bowman. And to make the one errand of it, ye might as well take the jug as well.'

"So off went Hegarty with the collecting-box, and little Butty Bowman behind with the jug; and there were the rest of them, some walking up and down, clenching their fists and grinding their teeth; some, too bad to move, stretched out on the benches, and the whole lot shivering and moaning like men in their last agony, 'Oh, Mother of God, have pity on me! I'm dying, I'm dying! Oh, will this night ever be over me?' And every few minutes, like Sister Anne in the story, the bandmaster would hop to the window looking across the bridge, and all the poor penitents would cry together 'Joe, Joe, are they coming yet?'

"After three-quarters of an hour back comes me

ORPHEUS AND HIS LUTE

two buckos. The bandmaster made one wild dive for the jug, and when he looked into it he gave a holy oath and covered his face with his hands. Butty Bowman held out his palm and there were three coppers in it. All at once the whole band began to shriek and shiver again

“ ‘Boys !’ says the bandmaster.

“ ‘What is it, Joe?’ says a few of them.

“ ‘Ye know me a long time, boys,’ says he, ‘don’t ye?’

“ ‘We do so, Joe,’ says they.

“ ‘And ye’ll bear witness,’ says he in the voice of a man that was inviting them all to his funeral, ‘ye’ll bear witness before the world that I’m a musician to the eyelets of me boots.’

“ ‘Ye are, Joe,’ says they, ‘you are, of course, but how’s that going to help us?’

“ ‘Well,’ says he, standing to attention and thumping his chest, ‘I don’t care who hears me say it but I was a man before I was a musician. . . . Butty, run down to Coveney’s and tell them to send up the donkey and butt’

“ ‘Erra, what’s up with you, Joe?’ says Butty, thinking you know, the bandmaster was after going dotty.

“ ‘Do what you’re told,’ says Joe, with the teeth chattering in his head, ‘do what you’re told and do it quick, for be the Lord above me, I’m not responsible for me actions at this present instant’

“ ‘Well, Joe being twice his height, away with Butty, and no sooner was he out of the room than the bandmaster broke down. They didn’t like the look of him at all, and no one went near him till Butty Bowman came back and tapped him on the shoulder. He got up without looking at anyone, took the keys from his side pocket and opened the instrument cupboard.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

"At the sight of this they all brightened up like one man, because though only a few of them guessed what he was about, they knew there was hope in sight.

"'One minute,' says Ned Hegarty, 'can we do this without a comity meeting?'

"'I'm the meeting,' says the bandmaster.

"'But shouldn't we have a resolution or something?' says Ned.

"'I'm proposing it,' says Shinkwin.

"'I'm seconding it,' says another.

"'Any objections?' asks the bandmaster.

"'Anyone that have,' says Shinkwin, 'just leave him take off his coat and I won't be long dealing with them'

"'Passed unanimously,' says the bandmaster. 'Hurry up, boys, or ould Moon's will be shut.'

"With that, out with them all in a scramble, every fellow carrying his own instrument, and Shinkwin cursing, trying to get the big drum downstairs. They put the instruments into the old donkey-butt and covered them with bags and tarpaulins, and off with them, beside the butt, in the pouring rain

"Old Moon, the pawnbroker, thought they were mad when they came in, one by one, each of them with his own contraption. He didn't want to take the things at all, but they wouldn't listen to objections.

"'How much so?' says he.

"'Ten quid,' says the bandmaster like a shot.

"'Erra, what ten quid?' says old Moon

"'Ten bob a man?' bawls the bandmaster, doing the morse code on the counter. ''Twill only quieten the drouth in us.'

"'Five,' says the pawnbroker.

"'What, five?' says the bandmaster. 'The drum alone is worth more than that.'

ORPHEUS AND HIS LUTE

“ ‘ And a lot of use a drum will be to me if ye don’t release it ! ’ says Moon.

“ ‘ On the sacred word of a musician,’ says the bandmaster, ‘ we’ll release the lot on Saturday night. . . . Take pity on us, Mr. Moon ! For the sake of your dead mother, Mr. Moon, or your dead father, or whoever is dearest to you of all that’s dead and gone, take pity on us this night.’

“ ‘ Seven-ten,’ says the pawnbroker, and not a ha’penny more would he give them if they lay down on the floor and breathed their last on him. Well, when they got the money out with them in one mad rush like a lot of demented creatures, seeing who’d be first to reach the pub, when all at once Butty Bowman gives a yell. They stopped, and the eyes hopping out of their heads.

“ ‘ Begorrah,’ says he in a disgusted voice, ‘ are ye going to spoil it all, are ye ? Are ye going into that pub with our sorrowful seven pound ten to blow it on the shawlies and cadgers of Irishtown ? How long will it last ye ? Be said by me, and in God’s holy name, have grace about ye and leave the bandmaster order the porter, and we’ll bring it back in the donkey-butt.’

“ They saw the sense in that, and, holding up their stomachs the way they wouldn’t drop out of them with the drouth, they went round to a quiet little pub, and by the back way they brought out four half-tierces. Then back with them the way they came, and when they got inside the bandroom, Butty Bowman turned the key in the door and went upstairs to the window.

“ ‘ What are you up to ? ’ says Shinkwin.

“ Butty said nothing but threw the key clean over the bridge into the river. They all applauded him for this, and well they might, because it wasn’t long before one woman and two women and three women began to hammer on the door below.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

“ ‘Leave them hammer away to hell now!’ says Butty.

“Then they set to it and they didn’t leave much of the liquor behind. What made it worse was the mob that was after gathering outside. The women were dancing and shouting and screaming for drink, and when they wouldn’t get it they drove in the window with stones, and when that didn’t serve them they took a ladder to it. Butty Bowman and the bandmaster had rare fun knocking them off it again.

“The following night there wasn’t a shilling left of the seven-ten.

“ ‘Boys,’ says the bandmaster, ‘we’ll have to steady up now and try to realise the old instruments. And as we’re about it, I’ll start taking the subscriptions from ye.’ And what he collected was the sum of fourpence ha’penny.

“ ‘This won’t do, boys,’ says he, ‘this won’t do at all at all. Seven and six a man is what I want from ye, and I want it in a hurry.’

“He might as well have been asking a slice of the sky as asking seven and six from that crowd. Weeks passed and a month passed, and three days before Patrick’s Day they have five and ninepence collected between them.

“ ‘Oh, boys, boys,’ says the bandmaster, ‘this is shocking. On Sunday morning I want every man jack of ye at the chapel gates and if that money isn’t collected there’ll be bad work.’ And to make it more solemn he got special labels for the old collecting-boxes printed ‘Great National Appeal.’

“That was the sorrowful national appeal for them. The people went in and out without as much as good-morrow to the boxes or the men that were rattling them. One gentleman they stopped put the whole thing in a couple of words. ‘After year

ORPHEUS AND HIS LUTE

last escapade,' says he, 'no decent man will ever put his hand in his pocket for ye again.' At the end of that day they had twenty-seven and six. The bandmaster was crazy.

" ' 'Tis the end of the band, boys,' says he.

" 'Erra,' says Shinkwin, 'we won't go down as easy as that. We'll make a house-to-house.'

" 'Take an oath first then,' says the bandmaster. . . . "Not a drop of drink till the instruments are back. . . . Right hand up, everyone! . . . So help me, God!'

" 'So help me, God!' says they all.

" 'That I might be killed stone dead!'

" 'That I might be killed stone dead!'

" 'Well, will ye remember it?' says Joe.

"And they did. They stuck to that as they never stuck to a pledge before. And much use it was to them. They made another pound out of the house-to-house. 'My God,' says the bandmaster, beating his head, 'we'll be the laughing-stock of Ireland if we don't turn out o' Patrick's Day.' They all had the scour on them now. Every hour or two one of them would be racing round to the bandmaster with a shilling or sixpence or even a couple of coppers he was after collecting somewhere. The bandmaster's hair was turning grey with anxiety.

"On Patrick's Eve up with him to the pawn.

" 'This and that, Mr. Moon,' says he, 'we'd be eternally obliged to you if you'd give us the loan of the instruments for the one day.'

" 'What a fool I'd be!' says old Moon, laughing in his face.

" 'For the love of God and the souls of the faithful departed!'

" 'No,' says old Moon, being a Lutheran by persuasion.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

~~Then,~~ says the bandmaster, hire 'em out to us.

" 'No,' says old Moon again.

" 'For a quid.'

" 'No.'

" 'For two quid.'

" 'No.'

" 'For three quid then, and that's every ha'penny we have and more, and may the shining angels make a bed in glory for your soul this night.'

" 'No, I tell you,' bawled old Moon.

" 'Hell is too good for the likes of you,' says the bandmaster. ✕

" After that Shinkwin went in and by main persuasion got the pawnbroker to agree to put the instruments on separate tickets. The first thing he released was his own big drum, and that walked away with one pound ten; then he took out a trombone, a cornet, a euphonium and two B flat clarinets. That left them without a penny in the world, and there was Shinkwin with tears in his eyes begging old Moon for the sake of the souls in Purgatory to throw in one of the side-drums, and he wouldn't, he was that black.

" They put what they had on the donkey and butt, and, 'twould break your heart to see them, one by one, running in distracted, crying out, 'Mr. Moon, Mr. Moon, throw in the old piccolo and I'll pay you o' Sathurday!' or 'Mr. Moon, Mr. Moon, take pity on us and give us the little drum!' They were bad for drink but they were worse for music, and after the pawn shut they were still there, decorating the wall outside, and every now and then one of them would give a tap on the window and if old Moon looked out they'd be all winking and crying and pointing with their thumbs, and saying, 'Mr. Moon,

ORPHEUS AND HIS LUTE

Mr. Moon, for the love of God and his Blessed Mother ! ’

“ In the latter end they got desperate entirely and up with a couple of them to Father Dennehy at the presbytery, begging him to intercede for them, but all the satisfaction he gave them was to say he’d be glad if the instruments were at the bottom of the sea, for all the scandal they were after causing in the parish.

“ That finished them. Next morning, down with them to the bandroom and in the cold light of day there wasn’t one that could face the thought of a turn-out with their couple of mangy instruments, and Melancholy Lane band appearing for the first time in their new uniforms. So off with them behind the bandmaster to get what little satisfaction they could out of jeering the other bands. They took up their stance at the end of a lane where there was a flight of steps, and no one that saw them but was sorry for them.

“ Well, you know the sort of turn-outs there used to be in the old times : bands and banners and floats and drays with living pictures of Brian Boru and St. Patrick and Mother Erin playing her harp and National Foresters with their horses and big feathers out of their hats, and the devil knows what else. A procession like that would take two hours to pass, and there were the bandmaster, Shinkwin, Butty Bowman, Ned Hegarty, and the others, with their tongues hanging out, and anyone that wouldn’t jeer them, be God, they’d jeer him, but you could see the music was after going to their heads, by the way they were hopping and screaming.

“ However, that was nothing till the Melancholy Lane Brass and Reed came by in their new uniforms playing—of all the tunes they could find—‘ Defiance,’

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

a march the Irishtown fellows were very fond of. Now, some to this day maintain that Melancholy Lane were to blame, and some say Irishtown ; some say the bandmaster of the Melancholy Lane gave the order ' Eyes Right ' and some say 'twas pure curiosity made his buckos turn their instruments on the Irishtown contingent. But, whatever it was, there was a roar, and the next minute the two bands were at one another's throats, and the new uniforms that Melancholy Lane took such pride in were wiping the mud from the streets so clean you could nearly eat your dinner off it after.

" Well, as God done it, Butty Bowman happened to have a bit of a heavy stick with him and with one lucky swipe he opened the head of a flute player and grabbed his flute. Then he made a run after the procession, and, falling into step as if nothing had happened, he struck up ' Brian Boru's March ' on his own. And whether 'twas the warlike sound of that or the way they were after being starved for music for a month past till they were more like hungry lions and tigers than men, the Irishtown fellows whipped off their belts and laid out all round them, and one by one they were racing after Bowman with cornets, clarinets, piccolos, and trombones ; and, if they were, their supporters were springing up from every quarter and falling in two deep at each side. And still the band kept running up with bleeding noses and broken heads and faces that were after being painted and decorated with mud. The last out were the bandmaster and Shinkwin, fighting a rearguard action with the big drum.

" Within five minutes of the first blow being struck Shinkwin gave the three taps, and if that band didn't play ' Brian Boru's March ' it'll never be played in this world. Every time they had to drop the instruments and shout they shouted in a

ORPHEUS AND HIS LUTE

way that would deafen you, and the people cheered them to the echo.

"But every good thing comes to an end, and so did the procession. The band returned by the Stream Road, and by that time they had a force three hundred strong behind them ready to shed blood or tear iron. Just at the bottle-neck bend they saw a cordon of police stretched across the road. The inspector stepped out and signalled them to stop. The crowd began to wave their sticks, and the bandmaster paid no heed to the signal. The police drew their batons but still Joe marched on. Then, about six yards from the cordon, he suddenly swung round, marking time. And as if they had it all planned, the band began to fall into concert formation in front of him. Before the march they were playing stopped, he snapped out 'Auld Lang Syne, boys!'

"A dead silence fell in the road as they struck up 'Auld Lang Syne.' They played it so that no one who heard them ever forgot it, they played it as if they were too full of music and couldn't get it out of their systems. On the last bar the bandmaster snapped out '*Piano!*' The people knew then they were in for a treat. The Irishtown fellows were famous for their *piano*; they could make those instruments sing like choir boys and never blur a note. The tears began to come to the people's eyes, and just when they thought they couldn't stand any more the bandmaster yelled so that he could be heard at the farthest corner of the crowd '*Pianissimo!*'

"At that word everyone held his breath. They knew now the band was out to beat itself. For about six bars Shinkwin tapped out the time softly on the big drum. All the other instruments except the clarinets and flutes came in on a whisper, playing

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

staccato, but the six clarinets took up the tune, and I never heard fiddles to compare with the Irishtown clarinets for sweetness. Then Hegarty, the champion piccolo player of Ireland, began to improvise a very melancholy ornamental passage above the clarinets—a thing he never did in his life before and that might have spoiled it all, but that day not a man in the Irishtown band could have made a mistake if you paid him for it. They were inspired, and Hegarty was inspired, and that one voice, playing trills and shakes over the clarinets, gave the last touch to it. After the first bar the inspector of the police took off his little round cap and every man there followed him.

“When the tune was over there was silence as if everyone was coming back to earth by a slow train, and then the inspector laid his hand on the band-master’s shoulder.

“‘I have to arrest you and your men, Mr. Dorgan,’ says he, ‘and I assure you no arrest I ever made caused me more regret, because in my opinion you’re a genius.’

“‘You needn’t arrest us, inspector,’ says the band-master, and some say there were tears in his eyes. ‘We’ll go to the Bridewell ourselves. The holy spirits are round us, and we must treat them gently.’

“And there and then they walked back to the Bridewell and surrendered without striking a blow.”

“And did they get back their instruments?” I asked.

“They did not,” said the old man. “They never played again. The Saint Patrick’s Temperance Sodality bought the tickets for a couple of pounds, and the band had one terrible night before they broke up for good

“But sure The Temperance Sodality couldn’t play

GREATER LONDON

for toffee. Temperance and music don't seem to go together somehow."

FRANK O'CONNOR

GREATER LONDON

IN Greater London, a stone and brick forest nearly thirty miles long, thirty miles broad, eight million people eat and drink and sleep, wander among seven thousand miles of streets, pay their insurance money, send for the doctor, and die. Through the centre of this vast area of asphalt hills and paved valleys, these orchards of lamp-posts and traffic lights, the River Thames goes winding, looking from above no more than a silvered thread lying across an arterial road. Yet the river made all this.* The river brought the old Roman galleys (one of them could be floated on the weekly milk supply of the modern city) from Ostia to the port of Londinium, for those cargoes of wheat and lead that might be taken as symbolic of the later national character of these island people. The river carefully laid along its terraces a nice mixture of clay and sand, that brick-earth out of which this forest grew. The inhabitants drink the river, run it through their wash-basins and bath-tubs, two hundred million gallons a day. Do they think about the river? Some do, even apart from those who still work on its greasy dimpled flood. Everything that man has thought about is considered here by somebody, from the diameter of Betelgeuse to the smaller parasites of the flea. Not since the City of the Golden Gates sank with all Atlantis has there been, in any one area of the world, so much thinking about everything, as well as so much stupidity about everything, as there is here. Eight million human creatures. The commercial capital of the globe. But there is commerce here

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

unknown to the Port of London Authority, the Stock Exchange, the Board of Trade. The thoughts, the dreams, the old shuddering fears of these eight millions depart along fantastic wave-lengths, leaving our own familiar space-time continuum, to build little heavens and hells in new time and strange dimensions of space. In exchange, radiations from distant stars penetrate the haze and perhaps bring to the pavements below obscure news that cannot be found in the evening papers. As we know, there are eight million private dramas being acted in this jungle of brickwork and cement, where steel-clawed ravenous monsters like bankruptcy and unemployment and angina pectoris and starvation and cancer come crashing through the thickets, where a favourable bank balance and a good digestion and an easy mind and love-found-and-fulfilled occasionally light the jungle ways with a flash of blue wings. But there are also eight million parts being acted here in a gigantic Mystery, with green globes and moons and suns and black space as scenic sets, a few tattered pages as a prompt book, and two famous illusionists, Here and Now, as stage managers. And what this is all about, nobody knows. The youngest of six half-starved children, listening to the rats in the darkness of a back room in Hoxton, does not know. The expensively educated and comfortably maintained elderly clerical gentleman who writes for the papers telling us all is well (or as well as is deserved) with this youngest of six in Hoxton, does not know. The gaunt young man hard at it in the Reading Room of the British Museum, preparing to denounce the elderly cleric and all his kind, does not know. Eight million, with all their houses, furniture, knick-knacks, mortgages, insurance policies, bills of sale, prescriptions, and love letters, rolling on in one gigantic Mystery. And eight million busy with their own

GREATER LONDON

private dramas, making the whole stone forest steam and hum. And there among them, toiling away with a thousand other organisations to victual them, is the Copper Kettle Café Company, Ltd.

Strange as it may seem, this company owed its success to the fact that most of the eight million are still poetically and not scientifically minded. Sometimes in happy ignorance, sometimes perhaps not, it fed its customers with increasing quantities of citric and tartaric acid and cotton-seed oil, sulphur dioxide and sodium sulphate and potassium bromate, manganese and copper, lead and arsenic. But these chemicals and metallic poisons were consumed in an atmosphere, specially created by the company, that lured the vague poetical mind of the customer away from all consideration of scientific matters. It reminded the customer of the time when meat and fish were not taken out of a tin, when there was real yeast and honest flour in bread, when fruit came straight from the tree and not from sulphur dioxide gas chambers. It belonged to some Arcadian ideal of English life, in which buxom, apple-cheeked landladies and sweet demure serving-maids waited behind chintz curtains upon the traveller with all that was fresh, pure, delicious in food and drink. Once inside a Copper Kettle café, which had a large imitation copper kettle hanging above its entrance, you forgot the roaring and stinking petrol engines outside, the smoke and the fog and the mud, the miles and miles of brick and stone and steel concrete, the whole metropolitan madness. You were back where actually you never belonged. You were a child again with a picture book. That was the trick, and it worked well. Every branch had the same features. the copper kettle as a sign, the countrified patterned curtains, the imitation brick floor, the painted tables and chairs and settles, the picture-book crockery, the

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

young waitresses in green and orange uniforms. The original café had been established in the City, not for the employers, with their passion for large authentic juicy pieces of meat and grilled soles and the like, things that cannot be faked and that cost money, but for the minor cashiers, the clerks, the typists. Now there were three more cafés in the City, and four other branches within three or four miles of the parent establishment. The latest to be opened was in Halberd Street, W.C.2, which is a short street just east of St. Martin's Lane and north of the Strand. It is a very mixed sort of neighbourhood this, a huddle and muddle of small taverns, unambitious business premises, shops that sell cigarettes and racing papers, publishing offices, Stage Doors, and obscure agencies. The Copper Kettle was the only light-lunch-and-tea place of the semi-genteel kind—for there were several small shops that catered for taximen and porters and door-keepers within two minutes' walk—and there was a fair chance of its doing a reasonably good trade, even though it could never have the turnover of the City branches. Mr. Isaacson, the managing director, who had once held high office with a famous firm of popular caterers, had been strongly in favour of the venture, and as Mr. Isaacson seemed to know everything there was to know about people with a shilling or two to spend on refreshment, he had been allowed to have his way.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

A GANGSTER'S FUNERAL

At ten o'clock in the morning Chicago looked brisk and clean. Over half the sky were little round clouds in long straight lines, not close together but with space between, as if some heavenly drill-

A GANGSTER'S FUNERAL

sergeant had but lately taken them in hand, barking in the way that sergeants use: "Clouds, 'tshun! Open ranks, march!" And turning smartly on his heel saluted his commanding officer (who was well above the horizon in spite of a heavy night with the Marines in China) and indicated that all was ready for inspection.

Little round clouds, then, filled one half of the sky and the other half was bright blue. The lake glittered under the sun and a pleasant wind sent the waves chasing after gleams of light that constantly mocked them and rode sparkling on their unsuspecting backs. The water stretched to a horizon of its own, and that was no boundary either, for the lake went far beyond its first skyline, and the wind blowing off it had the keenness that comes from so vast and lonely a playground.

The beach was like no other beach in the world. Well out of harm's way—for in winter the lake would throw mountainous waves ashore—stood a magnificent row of perpendicular castles. They soared into blue space, elegant, spectacular, and immensely strong. From a distance they looked like marble; but actually marble was too frail for their stupendous weight. And yet they had no appearance of weight, but the look of haughty elegance, an air of assured and calculated sublimity. The water-front of many towns is a squalid province of Barbary, but Chicago's lake-front is a splendid façade before the fat prosperity of the Middle West. . . .

When Juan arrived he had no time to look at all this breezy magnificence, for he was immediately occupied with the necessity of keeping Mr. Gehenna in sight. At first this was not difficult.

About five hundred people were waiting to welcome him with shouts of "*Evviva Red-eye!*" Most

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

of them were Italians of robust appearance who chattered loudly and pressed forward to greet their ruler. Several photographers claimed his attention, for whom Mr. Gehenna obligingly posed, and some reporters talked with him in an animated way. They laughed loudly at his several jokes and told him one or two of their own, whereat the King guffawed in the pleasantest manner. There were also half a dozen policemen present, with whom Mr. Gehenna shook hands and to whom he made remarks as witty as those which had entertained the reporters ; and on the outskirts of the crowd were a dozen or so more officers, some of whom stood with their thumbs tucked into their belts, looking conscientiously pugnacious and quietly ready for anything, and others leaned forward with ears greedy for the quips that made their superiors so merry, and eyes that looked enviously at all who were admitted intimates of the King. The only man unmoved by the reception was Wonny the Weeper. He stood by Red-eye's side, hands in pockets, his hat (because of the lump on his forehead) several sizes too small, and his spaniel eyes looking past all the vivacious Latin faces into some melancholy region of his own seeing.

Presently there was a murmur of new interest, and the crowd parted before a man who had the smooth and burly look which municipal politicians frequently acquire. He wore a rather wide-brimmed felt hat, and his jowl shone pink above a bright cravat. His coat was open to give his stomach air, and he walked through the crowd with a manner that effectively displayed his importance. Even Red-eye's attitude underwent a subtle change when the burly man greeted him by name.

"Well, Rod," he said in a loud and juicy voice, "How's tricks ?"

A GANGSTER'S FUNERAL

The King, though not unduly flattered, showed that he appreciated the compliment of the other's appearance.

"Fine," he answered, "just fine. How's yourself?"

The crowd made sibilant noises of respect and admiration as these two figures of importance—tall men, both of them—stood hand-clasped and smiling; and the photographers, once more insistent, took several photographs of the handshake and the warm smile that each man maintained *in situ* for some time. Then there was a general move.

Outside the station a commission of two or three hundred school-children waited for the King: little girls in white dresses and little boys with button eyes and wetly brushed black hair. Their voices rose shrill as macaws and cockatoos and wildly they waved the Italian and American flags which they carried—American in the right hand, Italian in the left. Red-eye walked smiling between the childish ranks, pausing here to pat a little head, there to chuck a little chin, and even to distribute occasional largesse of quarters and dimes. While he was so engaged Juan found a taxi-cab and told the driver that he wanted to follow Mr. Gehenna when the latter drove away.

"Follow Red-eye?" said the taxi-driver, and made a sucking noise with one-half of his mouth. "He'll be going to Cola Coloni's funeral, I guess."

"Then we'll go there as well," said Juan.

"Five bucks down and the fare when we get there," said the driver.

"That seems extravagant."

"Tain't always good for your health, followin' Red-eye," explained the driver.

Juan paid him five dollars and got into the taxi, though not without some misgivings. He had not

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

been very surprised at the demonstration made by Red-eye's adherents. It was, of course, interesting to see a criminal treated so amiably and welcomed by the very people one would, in normal circumstances, imagine to be his enemies. But his experience in New York had warned him against too much astonishment at such a spectacle, for travel quickly broadens the mind. And, indeed, Juan had expected a brass band, so that the presence of the school children, which otherwise he would have admitted to be a pretty gesture, now seemed a puny one. They might at least have carried larger flags, he thought.

Red-eye got into a waiting motor car. The little girls and boys cheered him shrilly. The man who looked like a municipal politician waved him good-bye. Red-eye drove off. Several other cars, full of his friends and supporters, followed closely. After them went Juan's taxi.

They had a long way to go. Once the turmoil of the business quarter had been left behind, the streets were not impressive. They were rather shabby, and it seemed to Juan that the city sprawled in a vast and aimless way. But towns nearly always look aimless to a stranger, though to their inhabitants they are not only full of purpose but full of the most important purpose in the world.

The surface of the road was bad and the procession of motor cars all jarred their springs as they passed the same points. There were a lot of negroes on the streets, and many southern Europeans. Had the sun not been shining everything would have looked very grey and depressing, but the sky was blue, or blue and white with little clouds, and the wind came merrily round corners and picked up odd bits of paper and shreds of rubbish, and threw them about like an urchin playing football with a bundle of rags.

A GANGSTER'S FUNERAL

Progress became slower. Traffic was holding them up. The street was crowded with people. Taking advantage of a halt the taxi-driver removed his cap and combed his hair with a small comb that he kept in his breast-pocket. Then he replaced his cap. After another hundred yards he turned and said, "I can't get any farther this way, but the Rigoletto Funeral Parlor's just round the block. That's where the body's lying. They're not letting traffic through because of the crowd. Only Red-eye and his lot. You'll have to walk if you want to go farther."

Red-eye's car had disappeared, waved on by a stout Irish policeman whose pistol-holster stuck out at a tangent from his round belly.

"What can I do with my suit-case?"

The driver shrugged his shoulders, not being interested.

Juan remembered the name of a hotel near the railway station. "Take it there," he said. "Give them my card and say that I'll arrive later." He took a note of the taxi-man's number, paid him what he asked, and then, hurrying, walked into the crowd.

This, he imagined, was not the neighbourhood in which Red-eye lived. The most notable characteristic of the street was a smell that emanated in separate gushes from the small restaurants that half-filled it, and joined with more odours pouring from upper windows, behind which lived many large families. It was a warm and clinging smell, and a king would not want to live always in its midst. Red-eye's business here was the funeral. The *cortège*, moving slowly at first, would be easy to follow, till somewhere on its route one could pick up a taxi. From the cemetery Red-eye would surely go home, and there the girl in black would be waiting for him. So Juan thought.

He had to push his way round the corner. Cola

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Coloni, the fighting chauffeur, had been a popular figure and his obsequies were attracting a great deal of attention. The crowd, however, was not compact, and Juan was able to squeeze and insinuate himself among the other sight-seers until he came very near to the front row and could observe the segment of open street opposite the Rigoletto Funeral Parlor. A hearse stood there and in a line neatly behind it were the motor cars in which Red-eye and his friends had driven. On the far boundary of the open space was another crowd of spectators.

The hearse was already half-covered with flowers. Superb white blossoms grew on its roof, and on the pavement outside the Funeral Parlor were banks of lilies. Except for the unfashionable neighbourhood it might have been a queen's funeral instead of a gangster's.

This, thought Juan, more than compensates for the inadequacy of Red-eye's reception. I wonder if they will have choir-boys?

The people crowded about him carried on lively conversations, but unfortunately he could understand nothing that was said, for they spoke mostly in the argot of Naples, with here and there a little Czech, Finnish, Gullah, and Yiddish.

Suddenly a hush fell on the multitude and from the Funeral Parlor stepped Red-eye himself, carrying a great faggot of Easter lilies. Behind him, covered with purple silk and snowy cyclamen, came the coffin borne by six men. Reverently they carried it out into the middle of the road so that a press photographer could take a picture of it, and silence lay so heavily on the street that beneath its weight the spectators stood staring and still.

Doubly, trebly astonishing then, was the shot that split that ponderous quiet. It was fired from an upper window and smashed into the flower-covered

A GANGSTER'S FUNERAL

coffin, whose bearers dropped it with a crash to the road while they fled for shelter. Two more shots followed the first ear-splitting detonation in the stony chasm of the street, and from the crowd of sightseers rose a harsh and multi-lingual yell of fear. Turning from the battle centre they fled outwards, like cattle in a panic, like a storm-driven wave, like jungle trees bent before the fierce monsoon.

In half a minute the street was empty for fifty yards in each direction—except for Juan, who stood like an innocent (but vastly interested) in the very middle, and Red-eye and Wonny, lying under cover of the coffin to fire through a parapet of lilies at the enemies who had taken them by surprise.

The battle was now in full swing. Several bullets struck the road no more than a few inches from Juan's feet, and realising, almost too late, that he was in grave danger, he ran to one of the motor cars that stood in line behind the hearse and leapt inside. By this time he was very sensibly afraid and still intensely curious, for this (except the minor episode in the New York speakeasy) was the first time that he had ever been under fire. Half a dozen bullets ripped through the roof of the motor car in which he hid, and the *tat-tat-tat* of machine-guns came from several directions. But in spite of the danger Juan raised his head to peer cautiously over the back of the seat.

Cola Coloni's coffin had burst open in its fall and Cola Coloni, very stiff and ungainly in his best suit, lay half out of it, half on a snow-white heap of cyclamen and odorous white violets and lilies of the valley. Over the edge of the coffin, between green leaves and white flowers, there thrust into sight the muzzle of a rifle and a hand that held an automatic pistol. The intrepid Red-eye and Wonny the marksman still held the fort. By now their followers

had penetrated to the rooms above the Funeral Parlor, and bringing shot-guns out of their trousers, pistols from under their arms, and machine-guns out of a bed where they had been concealed for such an emergency as this, they crowded to the windows and engaged the rival gangsters entrenched in the house opposite.

The magnificent plate-glass sides of the hearse had early disappeared, shot starrily to pieces, and very soon all the windows in the vicinity were full of prickly-edged holes or had become mere frames that held a few jagged splinters. A burst of machine-gun fire, ill-aimed, ripped into a pile of wreaths and sent white rose petals dancing into the air. A gangster, wounded in a tender place, howled with anguish. Several bullets lodged in motor car tyres which added their harmless explosions to the battle. A man tried to run across the street, but, mortally wounded in mid-passage, his knees sagged, his arms shot out, and his fingers just touched the farther pavement as if in a clumsy dive. He lay still.

And now Juan suddenly felt a violent blow on his left shoulder. From his kneeling position he fell to a sitting posture on the floor of the car, while a spasm of pain spread rapidly into his neck, and over his chest, and down his arm. With a feeling of mingled surprise and alarm it occurred to him that he was wounded. There was actually a hole in his coat, shoulder-high and close to the left lapel. When gingerly he thrust his right forefinger into it another wave of pain spread this way and that, and carefully unbuttoning his waistcoat he was concerned to find that his shirt was already bloodstained.

A feeling of intense indignation followed his initial sensation of alarm, and succeeding the indignation came mere unhappiness. With a handkerchief he tried to staunch the bleeding, and with all his heart

A GANGSTER'S FUNERAL

he wished that he had never seen Red-eye. There were still bullets thudding against walls and making the wickedest noise imaginable as they flicked over into a ricochet. But the fight grew more leisurely with the increasing scarcity of ammunition. The very last bullet, however—so Juan reflected, and crouched lower to think of it—could hurt as much as the first.

Then approaching with great speed, there came a fresh noise, a clangour of bells and sirens, a storm-away Anvil Chorus, and more shooting. The police were coming. They had open cars with machine-guns mounted in them, and they had borrowed a fire-engine to which twenty officers hung, holding strongly with one hand and shooting desperately with the other at every tempting window as their crimson juggernaut roared up the street. All the cowboys between Laramie and Las Vegas, galloping together, could scarcely have made so impressive an entrance.

The fire-engine stopped abruptly. The policemen leapt down, darted into doorways, and ran up strange stairways shooting as they went. The gangsters fled.

There were, it seemed, ways of escape from these houses, for with enviable ease the combatants simply disappeared before the breathless police. At the first sound of their sirens Red-eye and Wonny had slipped away. The King had already compromised himself by taking part in open warfare, and to find him still there when they arrived would have grossly embarrassed every policeman on the force. But Red-eye was a tactful man and fled in time. And so after all the shooting there was no one to arrest except the corpse on the road and two corpses in a house whose walls were well holed with bullets—and one of the latter had patently been lifeless for several days.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

With this small reward for their exertions the policemen welcomed the sight of Juan who, acutely sorry for himself and anticipating the generous sympathy of others, now emerged from his bullet-spattered car.

"Well, look who's here!" exclaimed a sergeant in a jocose and brutal voice; and immediately Juan found himself covered by six or seven revolvers and menaced with a large array of handcuffs.

"Take those things away," he said irritably. "I had nothing to do with all this tomfoolery. I'm wounded and I want to see a doctor."

The strange intonation of an English voice attracted more attention.

"Boys, it's the Prince of Wales himself," said one of the policemen.

"Who in hell are you, and how did you get here?" asked the sergeant.

Juan explained that he had been an innocent bystander and, caught between two fires, had taken the first refuge he noticed, which unfortunately had not been a secure one.

The sergeant listened attentively, conferred with a superior, and then sent for an ambulance, leaving Juan in charge of a stout red-faced officer.

"So you're an Englishman, are yez," said the latter. "Well, glory be to God!"

He looked lovingly at Juan and patted his arm, and then unable to control his emotion longer threw back his head and laughed with the utmost merriment, so that he almost split his red face in two.

The ambulance arrived and the Irish policeman, after helping Juan in, followed and sat beside him.

"An Englishman," he marvelled, "the first limey I ever saw shot in Chicago. Praise God I've lived to see the day. There's more sense in those gangsters than you'd be after thinking."

THE TUNNEL

And once again his head jerked back, his mouth sprang open, and he laughed as noisily as a quire of cornets, while the ambulance raced through the streets and Juan wore an expression as near disdainful indifference as he could contrive.

ERIC LINKLATER

THE TUNNEL

"SWEET vernal is over, and nearly all the ewes have lambed," Ballater was saying, as he and Lewis went together into the Commandant's quarters, whither the van Leydens had already been taken. "I think it's the best moment of the year. Hot days and cold evenings. Better than April. Much better than June." He had a pastoral independence of mind. Though he would earnestly discuss politics and the war, they were not in the core of his thought. Like a peasant, like a child, he preserved his own values with a stubborn and lovable innocence. And it was he who smoothed away the awkwardness of the van Leyden's visit, for after luncheon he permitted neither Lewis nor the Commandant to be their host, but showed them the fort, as if it were his country-house, with an irresistible pride of ownership, telling them of his fishing, his jay, his golden oriole in the orchard opposite, explaining the work he had done in his garden patch, and, when he heard a reed warbler merrily singing across the water, waving their attention to it, as if it were a member of an orchestra that he had summoned for the pleasure of his guests. The Baroness, after a cold beginning, was full of praise for Ballater when she heard of the Wiltshire acres. "What a charming friend you have, Lewis! You must bring him to stay with us. Or, if you will not come, then he must come alone." And van Leyden,

delighted to find in Lewis an Englishman who could speak Dutch, talked proudly of his library in the Castle at Enkendaal. "You must come to see it. It would interest you, Mr. Alison. He can have permission, Commandant, *met waar*?"

"But certainly he can have permission to visit the Castle at Enkendaal," the Commandant replied. The words Enkendaal and Kasteel fascinated him; he could no more keep them out of his conversation than he could prevent his corseted body from inclining a little whenever the Baron van Leyden addressed him. "But Mr. Alison," he added, "has always refused to take leave."

"Och!" said the Baron. "How is that? Julie says you taught her when she was a child. I wish you'd teach her again. She needs discipline, heaven knows! . . . But, though I'm not a scholar, I know their ways. My uncle Dirk would never leave his books unless it suited him. Invite yourself when you please."

The idea of having a pupil, a mind that he might impregnate, filled Lewis with excitement. Into his conversation with the Baroness this excitement entered. He laughed with her, and pleased her more than he had done hitherto; but he was thinking that, in the days when he had gone to Natton Lodge to teach Julie, Mrs. Quillan had appeared to be heavy and dull, with the beauty of a stiff flower always drooping towards him on its long stem, and that the child, full of fire and grace, had never seemed to be her daughter.

"You did not bring the beautiful Madame de Narwitz to-day?" the Commandant ventured, hoping that this compliment would recommend him to Julie's mother. "No, no, of course," he added hastily, seeing a shadow pass across the Baroness's face. "It would be difficult. . . . I understand."

THE TUNNEL

"No," said the Baroness, with sharpness in her tone. Then, turning to Lewis: "She wished to come. She wanted, she said, to see her schoolmaster in his cage."

At this the Commandant laughed heartily, wrinkling his lips under his clipped, white moustache, pressing his gloved hands to his waist and throwing back his head. The Baroness stared at him coolly for a moment; then turned away.

It was understood before the van Leydens went that Ballater was to visit them early in June. Meanwhile, the tranquil routine of the fort continued unbroken. Willett said no more of his project and Lewis imagined that it was postponed; then ceased to think of it. Herriot made no move.

One evening at dinner Herriot leaned across the table and poured wine into Lewis's glass. They had so often shared their wine that Lewis gave no more acknowledgement than a movement of his hand; the talk was not interrupted. Ballater announced that he had been sowing radishes; Jedwell didn't believe that the advance of the Allies near La Bassée could be maintained. Lewis continued a conversation with the Dutch captain.

"Anything you want from the Hague?" Herriot broke in. "I'm going on leave to-morrow." Lewis understood then that the wine in their glasses had that night a special significance; it was the last they would drink together, for Herriot would not return from the Hague; and he was sad, as though this were an old friend he was losing. The day became suddenly memorable and he cast his mind back over it, remembering how Ballater had given him a pair of field-glasses with which to observe the movements of a reed warbler on the farther side of the moat, and how, while he stood with the glasses to his eyes, a little

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

group had assembled behind him, eagerly discussing the resignations of Fisher and Churchill. The edge of the moat was deeply fringed with yellow iris, ablaze in the sun, and apple blossom was coming out.

These fragmentary details, by which alone day was divided from day, persisted in his imagination while he walked with Herriot in the courtyard after dinner. He could not free himself from the thought that they would never see each other again, or would meet as strangers, their intimacy lost. After the war, if both survived, they would speak of to-night—this walking up and down together, their unconfessed reluctance to separate, the little incident of the wine, and would struggle to recapture the vanished mood. But they would fail, and, after a few hours of friendly pretence, part, leaving over their next meeting an intentional vagueness.

Never before had he been so strongly aware that in each instant of their lives men die to that instant. It is not time that passes away from them but they who recede from the constancy, the immutability of time, so that when afterwards they look back upon themselves it is not themselves they see, not even—as it is customary to say—themselves as they formerly were, but strange ghosts made in their image, with whom they have no communication.

He heard Herriot saying : “ D’you know, Alison, this ache of mine to fly—I lose trust in it sometimes, just as you lose trust in your own job. Often one flies just for the excitement of speed and power, but that’s nothing. Any fool of a passenger gets it—it’s little more than a physical thrill. I want to fly for the sake of the flash of seeing that comes now and then—almost as if one died bodily, and escaped from oneself, and saw out on the other side. But I can’t tell you what it is I see. I can’t even remember it myself. It will be the same with you. Some day the

THE TUNNEL

kind of exaltation you told me of, that comes to you after days and days of thought, will suddenly become more than it has ever been before—and you will *see*. Then you'll come back, just as I come back to earth, and you won't be able to tell what you've seen—or remember it. But the thing you can't describe and can't remember will be the whole of life to you. Sometimes you'll call it God, and sometimes you'll feel that it's nothingness and that you've given up your life to nothingness. . . . And in what way you'll reach it, I don't know. Maybe through solitude. I doubt it. I believe you'll find what you're looking for *in* the world, not in withdrawing from it. Work, women, responsibility—you'll have to accept them and go through with them."

"If you're right," Lewis said, "after all this—and after I've learned from this—I shall have to start again."

They walked in silence beyond the courtyard, down the length of the buildings. The windows of the messroom threw patches of yellow light on to the small brick of the path, drawing a plum-like bloom out of its redness. "We'd better put in an appearance," Lewis said. "The Dutch will think you're conspiring." They entered the room and stood, propped by the wall, at a little distance from the roulette players.

"It's odd," Herriot said, shaking dead pipe-ash into his hand, "how our heavens seem to differ and yet are alike. I reach mine, as much of it as I shall ever reach, by going in a machine up into the air. But I'm a little man. You may become what I can never be—the invulnerable man, passed beyond harm. I can never be that. But our ideas come out of the same basket—or seem to to-night. Perhaps they won't again."

Half an hour later the roulette cloth was rolled up

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

and they went to their dormitories amid a little group talking of systems.

In the morning Herriot went on leave and did not reappear. The arguments provoked by his escape soon died, but the community was affected. Already, by grants of short leave, the character of internment had been changed ; now restlessness increased ; perhaps, it was said, permanent parole would be given. Preparations for tunnel-digging were continued by those who had no desire for parole or, desiring it, were without faith in diplomats ; and Ballater, having flattered the Commandant into taking a benevolent interest in gardens, proudly imported a spade. Rampart and messroom and dormitory were eager with rumour from the Hague. The fort had ceased to include the lives of its inhabitants.

After his visit to Enkendaal, Ballater returned to the fort at midnight. To his disappointment, Lewis was already asleep, and he was forced to turn in with his triumphs untold. In the morning he fared no better. He loitered in the messroom after breakfast, discussing with Ferrard, who was annoyingly stubborn and would not give way, whether a carp should properly be cooked in milk ; and when he had despaired of Ferrard, he found that Lewis was already inaccessible in Jedwell's room. He had therefore to content himself with the silent planting out of candy-tuft. He pulled a few radishes, intending to pull only a few ; but, he thought, if I pull them all at once there'll be enough to go round the mess. This would win fame for his garden, and the prospect of it was his consolation in an unprofitable hunt for a mole.

"Pretty good crop of radishes, sir," he cried as Jedwell passed.

"Ah, Ballater, still at your garden," was the reply, given without a turning of the head.

THE TUNNEL

Perhaps Jedwell had not heard. Ballater stared at the back of the little man's skull and at his ribbed neck. But he'll be glad enough to eat them, he thought, returning to his quest of the mole.

His afternoon was more fortunate. For once, he had no need to persuade Lewis to be idle. Lewis himself suggested that they should play tennis, and, when tennis was done, they fetched towels from the dormitory and went down to the landing-stage on the edge of the western ramparts. They swam and lay in the sun and swam again. "Hot!" Ballater said.

He was waiting, had long been waiting, to be asked his news of Enkendaal, but Lewis appeared to have forgotten that he had been there.

"You seem to be taking a day off," Ballater said. "Are you working to-night instead?"

"Not to-night."

"What's wrong? Are you stuck in the book?"

Lewis stretched his bare arms across the grass. "No. I read pretty steadily this morning. But this place has changed. And I've got the tunnel on my mind. Where to begin. How to begin. How to get through the floor—there's concrete, you know, under the wood."

"Oh, to hell with the tunnel," Ballater answered. "Too much like work on a day like this. I'm warm and dry already. . . . And, anyhow, I believe we shall be given parole before the tunnel's through. If we're not, and the tunnel's discovered or fails in some way, it will give the German Legation an excuse to have parole washed out and leave stopped. This place isn't so bad if you can get leave now and then. But I don't want to spend another winter here. The tunnel's more risk than it's worth."

"But you're in on it?"

"Of course I am. You can't say No to a thing like

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

that. You came in on it yourself. I did because you did. Run by Willett and Shordey and Lapham, it would have been hopeless. Now at least there's a sporting chance, though it is a devilish poor chance, if you ask me. Don't you agree?"

"About one to a hundred."

"Then we're wasting our time?"

"As long as we don't realise it too acutely, I suppose it doesn't matter. But I should like Willett's 'poor men' to have a run for their money."

Ballater turned over on his face and threw his towel aside.

"When we do get permanent parole," he said, "if we ever do, the place I should like to live in is Enkendaal. They were talking about it at dinner. The Baron said, Should we like to live in Enkendaal? I thought at first he meant in the Castle. But he meant on the estate. They own the village and all the land for miles round. Such country! Heath and pine. We went up to a place where you can look out between two woods right across to the German frontier. The Baron said if I wanted country and you wanted books we couldn't do better in Holland. He'd give you the run of his library."

"Did you see the library?"

"Yes. We went up there, into the tower."

"What kind of library is it?"

"Enormous. Great thick walls and——"

"I mean, what kind of books?"

"Oh!" . . . Ballater was wriggling across the grass towards his cigarette case. When the first wreath of smoke had twined into the air, he had forgotten about books. "You'd like the place," he said. "There are two great lakes at the foot of the tower—and the lilacs. . . . I admired them, and Julie gave——"

"Julie?" said Lewis.

THE TUNNEL

Ballater smiled. "Well, I don't call her that to her face yet. In fact, I don't call her anything. I can't call a perfectly good English girl Narwitz. She doesn't look in the least Narwitz. . . . Anyhow, she made me wear a sprig of lilac in my button-hole at dinner—took away my carnation and put the lilac in. There was a man there called Alex van Arkel; they call him Aguecheek behind his back; he was furious about the lilac, because she hadn't any for him. I don't like that man. He wears a bracelet Pro-German probably. And when he wants to annoy Julie he pretends that she must be pro-German too. You should see the colour come into her cheeks."

"I liked the Baron," Lewis said. "It's odd; I can vaguely remember now having met him at the Quillans' years ago, but until he came to the fort I'd forgotten that I had ever seen him. Did you talk much to him?"

"Shooting chiefly. And agriculture of course. He was frightfully interested when he found I really knew something about it. . . . But you can talk to Julie about anything. Except, I think, it's better to keep off the war. She's on edge about that. Not that she lets most people see it, but I saw it. I can often see what's going on in a girl's mind. And I think I was rather a relief to her because I'm English. I wish I could do something to help her. I believe I could if I were living there."

"Help her?"

"Well . . . in the Castle . . . everyone round her Dutch. And every Dutchman who comes there——" Ballater pressed the stub of his cigarette into the earth. "I don't blame them, poor fools. She's beautiful enough to make you want to cry. Do you know, once when she and I——"

Lewis had risen to his feet. "I'm going to swim again," he said. They walked down to the brink of

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

the water together, and Ballater put a watch into Lewis's hand, saying that he was going to sprint across the moat.

"I used to be fast at Dartmouth. You might time me. I don't think I've lost much of my speed"

In sixty-two seconds he touched the farther bank and began to return leisurely, pausing to lift a long white arm out of the water and to shout: "How long?" Being told, he disappeared with a splutter of satisfaction and came up again with a great threshing of arms and legs. As he swam, the water ran out in a twisting spiral of gold and steel and foam. Beyond him the countryside was red with sorrel and yellow with buttercups.

He stopped swimming and for a moment lay extended on his face, his hands dividing the calm surface before him, his body rippling through a little cloak of bubbles. And Lewis remembered how he had said: "She's beautiful enough to make you want to cry,"—an unexpected saying in Ballater, who now threw his shoulders out of the water and began to turn somersaults with a ridiculous grace, emerging at last breathless and in grinning expectation of applause. Lewis was trying to imagine her, but he saw at first only the shadowy figure of a child known in the past; then, suddenly, he saw her cheek as he had seen it when Ballater spoke of the colour rising in it. He could not imagine her face, but her cheek he saw and the swift flow of colour and the flash of the eyes, though the eyes themselves were unimagined. He laughed at Ballater and dived into the water after him.

They swam down the canal and across to the farther bank, visiting the reed warbler's nest. "One egg," said Ballater. "Now I'll race you to the boom;" and at the end of the race they lay on the water, exhausted, silent, while birds hung and arrowed in the air above them. Inaudible waves

THE TUNNEL

lapped at their temples and slid over their ankles and wrists. Without speaking they swam back and stretched themselves out again on the hot boards of the landing stage.

It was resolved that the mouth of the tunnel should be under Lewis's bed. A large boring should be carried across the room, and the earth from it packed handful by handful in the nine-inch space between wooden floor and concrete foundation. Under the path, under the rampart and its barbed wire, a narrow tunnel should then be pushed forward to the inner edge of the moat. The broader shaft would become a receptacle for earth from the narrower ; the need for close, laborious packing would cease, and the narrow shaft, once begun, would make swift progress. One night, perhaps in early autumn, twenty-six men would assemble at the moat's brim beneath an unsuspecting sentry. They would launch off into the water together. The sentry, in an embarrassment of targets, would miss his aim. At worst, twenty-four would clamber up the farther bank. Three might get to Rotterdam ; two, it was hoped, to England.

To turn back a flap of linoleum and hinge a trap-door in the floor-boarding was easy enough. But how was the concrete to be broken ? Lewis remembered that Willett was by profession a strong man and that the Commandant was of genial disposition.

"I can't get exercise, sir, not the right kind of exercise," Willett said. Exposing his muscles, he made it clear that they were deteriorating ; his livelihood was slipping from him ; when the war was done, his wife and children must starve. "Ja, ja," said the Commandant, "I will see what I can think of," but Lewis had already decided that what Willett needed was a heavy crowbar from the garrison store-

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

This was obtained. Willett exercised himself with it conspicuously; the garrison, passing through the courtyard, were confirmed in their opinion that the English were mad; the Commandant, when he had guests, brought them to the window of his quarters to observe Willett's behaviour. They were well entertained by it.

Meanwhile two clubs were organised. The Photography Club, under Ballater's control, obtained permission to import oxygen, in which the Commandant saw no evil. The Boxing Club, advertised on the messroom notice-board, invited the Commandant to be its Honorary President, and he knew at once how wrong he had been in supposing that the Englishmen disliked or laughed at him. "There is no greater honour," he said in a little speech after dinner, "than to be invited by your countrymen to share in their sport"; and for the first meeting of the Boxing Club, held in B Three dormitory when dinner was over, he put on his smartest uniform. Never since his coming to the fort had he enjoyed himself so much. The boxing itself was tedious, but he applauded with all his heart. To accept a few drinks, to refuse many more with a wag of his finger and a shake of his head, to unbend in a manner befitting a gentleman who knew how to preserve his dignity and yet be a "sport"—what could be more delightful? "To-night we are all sports together, isn't?"

"Yes, sir," said Ferrard, lifting his glass and his eyebrows, "all sports together! *Vive les Pays-Bas!*"

"*Vive les Pays-Bas!*" cried twenty-six Englishmen in chorus.

The Commandant rose to the toast. How the Englishmen cheered! How they sang! But their taste in music was execrable. Men of no other nation would play three gramophones together and shout them all down. But let them shout. Let them sing.

THE TUNNEL

The legend of this great party would spread to the Hague. No one could say hereafter that a Commandant was a failure who was thus welcomed into his captives' grotesque entertainments. At eleven o'clock he bade them good-night and withdrew. A few revellers escorted him to his lodgings and serenaded him. He thanked God that he had the gift of popularity. It was odd that he had ever doubted it.

A week later the Boxing Club met again. The Commandant was invited but, feeling that habitual unbending might be bad for discipline, he made gracious excuses. The blinds of the dormitory were drawn. Drink was brought; three gramophones played; Sezley and Gestable put on boxing gloves and were prepared to box if any intrusion by the garrison staff should make boxing necessary. But they did not box. They stood in the ring and applauded themselves. The room was full of men shouting and singing and stamping their feet. To the sentries a few yards away, the uproar did not differ from that in which, a week earlier, the Commandant had shared. They continued on their beat; the child-English were drunk again; German officers would certainly have behaved with more dignity. Meanwhile Lewis's bed had been pulled out of its corner. The flap of linoleum was turned back, the trap-door opened. In each *crescendo* of cheering, Willett attacked the concrete with his crowbar.

The material was stubborn and the attack prolonged. What had been a joke became a business. Spontaneity died. The cheering of boxers who did not box, the singing of bawdy songs by sober men, the intervening silences, the artificial cries of laughter and partisanship with which each hush was raked—all these it was necessary to orchestrate and control. Lewis stood on a trunk with an ivory hairbrush in

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

his hand. He began to take pleasure in calling forth new combinations of sound ; they excited him and made him laugh. A group in a distant corner broke into song whenever his brush was pointed at it ; another group sprang into obedient competition ; when he stamped his feet, all feet were stamped ; when he beckoned sound towards him, sound came ; when both his hands were stretched out in repression, the uproar weakened. He signalled to Sezley and Gestable ; instantly the room was full of the thud and patter of boxing gloves beaten against a wall. A glance towards the crowbar having told him that Willett, with lips set and sweat running from him, was rested and prepared to attack again, he threw his clenched fists high above his head, the ivory brush flashed in the shine of the oil lamp, and the impact of steel upon concrete was drowned in yells of victory and groans of disappointment.

"That's enough," Willett exclaimed at last, standing clear. "You can dig to-morrow. Keep the party going till we've closed down the trap and squared off."

For a little while the noise was continued. Lumps of concrete were packed away into a locked trunk ; by day they would be taken out to the ramparts one by one and dropped secretly into the moat. The meeting of the Boxing Club dispersed ; members who slept in other dormitories reeled into the night, singing drunken catches, their gait carefully unsteady, their arms linked.

Gestable, inspired by the part he was playing, invented a liquorish quarrel. "Never been m'sober i'me life !" he protested with truth. And even Carroll-Blair's thin voice was to be heard uplifted in Harrovian song, which was all the song he knew.

Lewis, in bed at last, picked up a book but could not read. Night rounds are made at fixed hours, he

THE TUNNEL

thought If we have to dig late, we can avoid them. But better dig in the early evening. There are no dormitory rounds before midnight. The shriek of a distant train reminded him of his coming to the fort, of plodding across the fields at Herriot's side. The noise of the shouting and the throbbing wail of the gramophones were still in his ears. He saw again the faces of the singers uplifted towards him, their open mouths, their fixed eyes—they had been like a ring of dogs howling at the moon; and he felt again the ivory hairbrush under his fingers. While the scene lasted he had been excited by it, had even been proud.

Ballater, in blue silk pyjamas, looked up from the magazine he was reading.

"Well?" he said. "All right? . . . pretty good staff work"

Sezley was lowering the oil lamps by their chains and puffing down their chimneys. The room fell into darkness and silence.

Lewis and Ballater shared a watch as diggers and carriers. One evening, when they were in the tunnel together, working by candlelight amid the thick smell of earth and crumbled masonry and stale air, Ballater dropped the tool he was using and said quietly: "It's a marvellous night outside. Did you notice? The Plough bright as if there were a frost, but everything sniffing of summer." He scraped sweat from his forehead with the edge of an earthy hand. "This hole stinks like the double-bottoms of a cruiser. . . . Come on, let's get the loose stuff shovelled back. We haven't room to work," and, kneeling across the tunnel in single file, they began like two dogs to scrape earth backward between their legs. This done, it was Ballater's turn to hold the candle while Lewis attacked the earth-face.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

"My God, Alison," Ballater said, "why are we burrowing here like moles? When you came into the fort, did you imagine yourself doing this?"

Lewis was struck, not only by the shaft of irony that had touched Ballater, but by a feeling of guilt and desolation.

"No," he said. "I didn't see myself as a man of action."

"Never again? Not even after the war?"

Lewis was struggling with a ledge of earth in which stones were deeply embedded. When he had broken it down, he replied:

"Perhaps never again. I didn't swear to that. But I did swear to myself that while I was here and had this godsent chance——"

He could not continue. In the confinement of the tunnel every conversation but a demand that the candle should be held higher or lower became ridiculous, and he returned to his work in silence. But his thought ran on. Solitude and a discipline of peaceful scholarship might prove, as Herriot had often suggested, not to be his ultimate way of life; he didn't know; that lay in the future; some day he might have strength enough to preserve an absolute stillness of the spirit, even amid the activities of the world. But if ever this was to become possible, it could be made possible in him, he believed, only by the discipline of quietness. The opportunity had been given him. He remembered with what delight and with what assurance he had welcomed it. Now, by every evening in the tunnel and by every thought of escape, he was betraying it.

"I'll take over," Ballater said, exchanging his candle for the tool with which Lewis had been digging. "You've been hacking at it like a madman. I shall take life more easily. . . . It must be nearly time for our reliefs."

THE TUNNEL

Work had begun again, when a sound behind them, at the entrance of the tunnel, told that the trap-door had been hastily closed.

"Someone coming," Ballater whispered, and ceased to dig, that the sound of his tool might not be heard above ground. "Better put out the candle."

"No light can show through if they've got the linoleum-flap down. If they haven't, we're done."

"Still we may want the light later on. The Lord knows how long we may not have to sit here if Willett can't get rid of the man, whoever he is. It may be the Commandant come to be affable. He might stay for hours."

"If he does," Lewis added, "he'll notice that we don't come to bed."

"Oh, Willett will invent some lie."

"Can't go on lying for ever."

"Anyhow," Ballater said, "we shall quietly suffocate."

The candle was put out. They lay in darkness on their stomachs and waited. Lewis forgot that he was in the tunnel, and the bitterness of his self-reproach passed from him. We make ourselves, he thought, by struggle and rule, but a force deeper than our will, deeper than our consciousness, corrects our making. To cultivate the man of intellect is not enough, for stillness is a quality of the whole man. We are like the strings of a stringed instrument which, slackened in any part, are dead; they can yield no music but the music proper to themselves and then only if their tension be just. Each man must discover the perfect tension of his being—in action or solitude, in love or asceticism, in philosophy or faith—by continual adjustments of thought and experience; and he asked himself whether the particular seclusion of the fort might not be a phase from which he was emerging. What development of his scholarship would attend

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

the fresh impulses stirring within him? But if the tunnel succeeds, he added, there may be no more scholarship. His longing for seclusion returned, but for a seclusion that seemed to him, as he strove now to imagine it, less wintry, more beautiful and flowering, than that by which he had been bound.

He opened his eyes in the darkness and saw the pale glimmer of the fist on which his cheek had been resting.

"The trap-door is being opened," Ballater said.

The gleam in the tunnel increased.

"All clear now," said Willett, in the hoarse whisper of one who had a habit of conspiracy. "You fellows still alive?"

Weeks passed in digging and alarms. That he might not cease to read, Lewis imposed daily tasks on himself and performed them, but he was restless and troubled. When news was brought to him in Jewell's room that the tunnel had been discovered, he started from his chair, thinking at first only of the failure of his enterprise, but, as he went towards the dormitory, joy mounted within him and he thought: Now I shall have peace. Now there'll be quiet again.

A servant in the dormitory had noticed the crease made by the continual turning back of the linoleum and, his curiosity aroused, had come upon the trap-door. Whether the man made this discovery by chance or had been sent to investigate by Dutch officers aroused by some suspicion was not known; certainly he remained firm against threat and bribery and could not be prevented from making his report. The Commandant was at first indignant. The English officers had betrayed his trust in them. They had rewarded his kindnesses by doing their utmost to ruin his career. Their ingratitude was shameful. Had he not come himself as a friend to share their entertain-

THE TUNNEL

ments in this very room ? An attempt was made to suggest to him that it was a duty of interned officers to escape if they could, but he was beyond reason. If he was allowed to remain serious, they were lost ; the wildest penalties would be imposed upon them ; no weapon could now be effective against him but ridicule ; only his vanity could be touched. While others argued and the Commandant raged, Ferrard brought salvation.

" In this very room we drank and we laughed," the Commandant cried. " We trusted one another and were friends. And you——"

" Yes, sir," said Ferrard quietly. " We were all sports together. *Vive les Pays-Bas !* "

The ring of serious, disappointed faces began to smile. The Commandant saw mouths opening to laugh. The intolerable levity of the English, who would laugh at anything ! Then, suddenly, as he perceived that they were laughing at him, his expression changed from anger to a pitiable embarrassment. An instinct of self-preservation enabled him to see their joke. He was delighted because he had seen it.

" *Les Pays-Bas ?* The Low Countries ? That was it—the tunnel under the ground ? Even then—so early ? "

He threw back his head and outlaughed them all. Before his mood could change, they began to show him their tunnelling equipment : old pyjamas stained with earth, their entrenching tool, the electric torches that had displaced candles which in the foul atmosphere of the inner tunnel would burn no longer, their stores of earth, Willett's crowbar, the rules and agenda of the Boxing Club.

" And I was your President ! " he exclaimed, when the purpose of the Club had been made clear to him. But his face fell when he was invited to inspect the tunnel. " Won't you go down and look at it, sir ? "

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Ferrard suggested. "We can lend you some kit." Should he preserve his dignity or in pyjamas regain the esteem of these barbarians? He smirked and hesitated. Pyjamas were brought and he suffered them to be put on over his uniform; gloves were provided; a scarf was tied over his head. His grotesque figure, having climbed through the trap-door, sank on its hands and knees and began to crawl into the hole.

"That's the end of that," Willett said gloomily, and turning to the servant who had discovered the tunnel, a timid little man in brown overalls, he exclaimed with bitter good-humour: "Are you the one man on earth who won't take a bribe?"

"Ja, mijnheer," the Dutchman answered, understanding nothing.

Lewis turned away with a smile. He could have shouted his gratitude for this saving farce. A weight had been lifted from him. This evening, the tunnel under his bed would be empty; he would light his candle and re-build his screen of books. He was free again; and when he returned to Jedwell's room, it seemed to have recovered much of its former composure.

CHARLES MORGAN

EXAMPLE OF MODERN SCIENCE

AUNT FLORENCE has been invited to give a short address to the girls of St. Primrose and to present them with prizes.

She has said that nothing will induce her to do it. She has said it five times.

She has added, twice, that to speak from a platform would kill her—neither more nor less. (It couldn't be *more* surely?) She has said that even if

EXAMPLE OF MODERN SCIENCE

she *did* do it, nobody would hear her because her voice doesn't carry.

Now Aunt Florence is wavering.

She says that perhaps it is a duty, and quite likely they will have a microphone.

She is wavering more and more.

She says : What are we here for at all if not to help one another ?

Finally she says that if I will go with her she *will* address the girls of St. Primrose and present them with their prizes.

She says that *no one*, in her opinion, can do more than his best.

Aunt Florence and I have reached the doors of St. Primrose, and a man in an alpaca coat has directed me to put the car between a laurel-bush and a saloon six-seater.

Our car is the shabbiest one there and the oldest. Almost a museum-piece.

Aunt Florence says she wishes she had put on her green hat instead of her brown one. It would, she thinks, have given her more confidence.

Someone is coming to open the door.

Aunt Florence suddenly exclaims that *it's not too late*, even now. We could still make a dash for it and go.

She looks as if she really means it.

I tell her that everything will be all right, it won't take long, and I shall be sitting quite close, probably on the platform with her.

This doesn't seem to encourage her as much as I'd hoped.

We are actually in the School Hall.

It is gigantic.

There are hundreds and hundreds of girls, and an average of about one mother to every girl—(so it's all nonsense about the decline in the birth-rate)—and three fathers and one grandfather.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

There is a platform, and the Staff and the Headmistress and Aunt Florence and I are all ranged on it behind a table loaded with prizes.

Aunt Florence has turned a pale-green colour.

"It's quite all right," I say in a whisper.

"No, dear, it isn't. My voice will never carry in a place this size."

"But there's the microphone, on the table. Just speak into that quite quietly."

"Like an announcer, dear?" says Aunt Florence in tones of horror.

Before I can reassure her the Headmistress has begun to say how pleased she is to see us all there. Every word audible, and she isn't raising her voice in the least—just speaking into the microphone like an announcer. Modern science, I tell Aunt Florence in a whisper, has completely robbed public speaking of any terrors it may ever have held.

Aunt Florence only answers "What?" inattentively.

Aunt Florence is on her feet in front of the microphone.

She is uttering.

As she is turning her back on me I can't hear a word, but everybody in front looks pleased. The grandfather is leaning well forward, with one hand to his ear so as to make sure of not missing a word. (Evidently still mentally alert, although ancient.)

Presently Aunt Florence comes to an end and is applauded.

She sits down.

The Headmistress turns to her and says, Would she now present the School Trophy to the captain of the hockey team? *Here* it is. She picks up the microphone from the table and hands it to Aunt Florence—"This clock. . . ."

E. M. DELAFIELD

ESSAYS AND STUDIES

A MODERN BALLAD

O WHAT is that sound which so thrills the ear
Down in the valley drumming, drumming ?
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear
Over the distance brightly, brightly ?
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,
As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear ;
What are they doing this morning, this morning ?
Only the usual manœuvres, dear,
Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there ;
Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling ?
Perhaps a change in the orders, dear ;
Why are you kneeling ?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care ;
Haven't they reined their horses, their horses ?
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,
None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want, with white hair ;
Is it the parson, is it, is it ?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
Without a visit.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

O it must be the farmer who lives so near,
It must be the farmer, so cunning, cunning ;
They have passed the farm already, dear,
And now they are running.

O where are you going ? Stay with me here.
Were the vows you swore me deceiving, deceiving ?
No, I promised to love you, dear,
But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,
O it's the gate where they're turning, turning ;
Their feet are heavy on the floor
And their eyes are burning.

W. H. AUDEN

This poem appeared in the December 1934 number of that very up-to-date little periodical, *New Verse*, under the simple unassuming title, "Ballad"

"Ah!" you exclaim, "at last something plain and straightforward! Now we know where we are!" And you think of *The Twa Sisters o' Binourie* and of *Chevy Chase*; or—if they belong to the too distant past—there is *Young Lochinvar* and there is *Lord Ullin's Daughter*. "Mediaeval or modern," you say to yourself, "a ballad is a ballad, a poem that tells a simple story." Does not the dictionary define it as "a popular semi-epic or patriotic tale of adventure or daring in verse"?

You remember how *Lochinvar* begins:—

"O Young Lochinvar has come out of the west,
In all the wide border his steed is the best . . ."

an opening that tumbles you at once at full speed

A MODERN BALLAD

right into the story; and when you find ~~Anden~~ beginning in exactly the same way.

"O what is that sound that so thrills the ear . . ."

you start, full of confidence.

At first all goes well. It is a story about soldiers. That is quite clear. It is perhaps an invasion by a victorious enemy? At any rate the soldiers are coming. And the central point from which the story is being told is obviously a house in which there are two people. A husband and a wife? Or a mother and child? You cannot quite tell at first. So you go on reading, still full of confidence. Courage! The story as it develops will make all things clear . . .

But stay—"What are they doing with all that gear?" What indeed are they doing? It cannot be an invasion after all; since we are told that they are only performing the usual manœuvres. The local militia, perhaps; but that does not account for the emotion of our two people in the house, "Why are you kneeling?"

No, the soldiers must mean something sinister and deadly to the people in the house. Let us forget that awkward remark about "the usual manœuvres" and go back to our original idea of a hostile force advancing. Then the story should continue with their gradual progress (stanza by stanza) up the valley, sacking and pillaging as they go, until at last they reach our house. They break down the door, they enter, and (climax!) our hero and heroine are left to face the tender mercies of the invader.

That makes a fine swinging story. But something has gone wrong. Nothing of the sort happens. The soldiers appear to be behaving very oddly. They do not stop at the doctor's (you would not perhaps expect that, seeing that "they are none of them

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

wounded") ; but they do not stop at the parson's, either ; or at the farmhouse which, since we are specially told that the farmer is a clever man of business, might be presumed to be well worth plundering. No, they are making straight for our house ; and (what is more) they have evidently received orders to proceed at the double.

But what is happening behind that locked and bolted door ? A very odd thing. We see now that the two occupants of the house cannot be mother and child. They must be husband and wife. For the one has sworn vows to the other, to stay with her, to love and cherish her . . . That must be the marriage vow. But does he stay with her ? Does he stand by her at the moment when the need for his protection has become so supremely urgent ? He does not. He does not even say that he is sorry. He simply tells her that it is time for him to be leaving.

At this point you begin to wonder whether our original idea of an enemy advancing was the right one after all. May it not be that the soldiers were from the first intended for soldiers of the king and the husband, being a reservist, tears himself away from his young wife to answer the call of duty ?

“ I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more ”

This at least affords a rational explanation of his otherwise inexplicable conduct ; and on these lines we can make a kind of sense out of the poem. Our simple story creaks a little here and there, but it still remains a story. The soldiers are friendly, though the husband, knowing their errand, is naturally upset when he first catches sight of them. “ I don't want to leave you, but I feel I ought to go,” he says to his wife, as the regiment with which he is

A MODERN BALLAD

to join up arrives at the door. (It is odd, of course, that they arrive at the double) . . .

But there is still the final stanza. You embark on it ; and bang goes all the logic of the story ! The friendly soldiers are unfriendly enough to break the lock and splinter the door.

“ Their feet are heavy on the floor
And their eyes are burning.”

This is all wrong ! Surely in this last stanza they cannot be anything but hostile troops, the advance guard of an invading army ? But if so, what becomes of the story ? You read it again (with special care in case you missed some vital hint the first time) ; but still it seems to you a queer sort of muddle. Like a chameleon, it seems to change colour, stanza by stanza.

In fact, on these lines (of simple straightforward narrative) you cannot make sense of it at all.

But suppose you approach it from a different angle. Suppose you abandon all idea of a connected narrative. Suppose you forget Lochinvar and the traditional ballad, which tells a plain “patriotic tale of adventure or daring.” Put all such thoughts out of your mind—even though Auden’s “ballad” does begin so encouragingly in the traditional manner. “Once upon a time some soldiers, some soldiers dressed in scarlet appeared in a quiet little valley. . . .” But your difficulty was (was it not ?) that the story about the soldiers did not develop along normal straightforward lines. Very well then. Read on without expecting any such development and see what happens. Let your imagination work upon each stanza as it comes, and do not bother about its exact and literal connection with what has gone before.

There is one obvious connection, of course. We

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

begin with the soldiers and the two people in the house ; and we finish with them. In fact, throughout the whole poem they are continuously present. They are two " constants " which persist throughout. But you are not now looking for an obviously connected story. You are not worrying about the soldiers, whether they are invading enemy or local troops on their autumn manœuvres, or about the exact relationship between the two in the house. Mother and child, husband and wife—it is enough for you to keep in mind either possibility (or indeed any other that may occur to you). They lend you their eyes and you share their anxious feelings at the first glimpse of a red-coat in the valley. " The soldiers are coming." You watch their movements. You see them change direction, and pretend as you may that it is nothing but an innocent manœuvre, you have a dreadful suspicion of the goal for which they are making. You see them pass by all the other houses. They pass the doctor, the parson, even the farmer, " so cunning." Is he cunning because he has made money out of farming? or because with soldiers about he knows how to sell to friend or foe and make a good thing out of it? No matter, you do not stop to bother. What matters is that your suspicion is no longer a suspicion. They are coming ; and that spells tragedy. " Dear, I must be leaving." Whether he leaves her to answer the call of duty or to fly like a coward or to die in defence of all that he holds dear, what difference can it make? Anyway, it means the break-up of that peaceful little home. The soldiers are running now. You hear the crash of the door, as the lock splinters and they force their way in. . . . }

There the story ends ; and reading it like this, letting your imagination run free and surrendering yourself to the mounting tide of emotion, what have

A MODERN BALLAD

you made of it now? At any rate you have succeeded in "making sense" of it. It may not be quite the same sense that you would have made out of a simple ballad in the traditional manner; but is it a worse kind of sense✓do you think? or is it less real? or less exciting?

Reading in this way, you notice one thing immediately. The whole poem rises steadily to a climax, and to that climax each stanza contributes, like stone piled on stone, in exactly the same way as in a plain straightforward story the various incidents follow one another in logical sequence and go to build up the dénouement. Take it in pieces stanza by stanza, and the precise logical relation between them eludes you; but take it as a whole and you find yourself irresistibly (one might almost say logically!) swept along to the conclusion.

Consider a little further. We start, as we have seen, in the traditional ballad manner, with a particular incident concerned with particular people. There are the two in the house and there are the soldiers. But we are given no further details to enable us to identify them more definitely. They may be this and they may be that; we cannot tell. Indeed, sometimes it seems they must be one thing and sometimes another, all in the course of one single story. And as we read and discover that the soldiers, for instance, in one stanza have the appearance of friendly troops and in another cannot be anything but hostile, whilst in yet another they might reasonably be either, we must surely suspect that such ambiguity is deliberate on the poet's part. And when we have reached the end, we cannot have any doubt that we are meant to keep all these possibilities in our minds—all of them being in some way necessary to the full understanding of the story.

You may think this a feat of mental gymnastics as

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

difficult as keeping half a dozen balls simultaneously in the air; but it will only seem so if you concentrate, so to speak, on the number of balls and not upon the whole process. Even your expert juggler, if he fixes his attention on one ball to the exclusion of the others, is apt to drop the lot

So with your reading of the poem. You must not demand that every "i" should be dotted and every "t" crossed. The author had no such intention. He is aiming at something quite different; and if you are to realise his aim, you must allow him to call the tune. You will be careful therefore not to let any indefiniteness in the parts interfere with your comprehension of the whole.

What actually happens to us as we read (and what may make it seem a little strange at first to anyone expecting the plain straightforward method) is simply this: after the first two lines we pass straight from the particular to the general. Or, in other words, our story is not concerned with any particular pair of human beings or any particular body of soldiers (hence we do not need names or labels for precise identification); but it covers any—and every—united pair, mother and child, husband and wife, lover and mistress; and it covers any and all who follow the trade of war. It is as general in its application as an advertisement slogan: "Mother, is your child's tongue furred?"

What has now become of our simple straightforward ballad, our plain tale of adventure or daring? Vanished "the baseless fabric of this vision" (if we may quote *Prospero*) even as

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces
... shall dissolve ..."

but leave, fortunately for us, more than a rack behind. There is left, in fact, a poem, which if we

CAESAR'S DEATH

read it in the right way gives us at least as much satisfaction, though of a different kind, as any *Lochinvar*.

MARTIN GILKES

CAESAR'S DEATH

ON the 19th of March 44, Caesar was to leave for the East on his Parthian campaign. On the Ides, the 15th, a meeting of the Senate was called to make the final arrangements, and this was the occasion which the conspirators selected for their deed. A month before at the Wolf-festival, the Lupercalia, Caesar had been offered a crown by Antony, and when he had put it aside there had been shouts of "Hail, O King!" although the main plaudits were for the rejection. What had to be done must be done at once, for the Roman people were plainly in a divided mood. It was resolved that the Senate's meeting was the proper occasion, since the whole body of senators would thus be compromised, and the murder would have the colour of a ceremonial act of justice. On the night of the 14th the conspirators dined with Cassius. Some proposed that Antony and Lepidus also should die, but Marcus Brutus objected that this would spoil the sacrificial character of the deed. Cicero was not admitted to their confidence, being regarded as too old, too garrulous, and too timid. Caesar supped with Lepidus, and at the board sat his old marshal, Decimus Brutus, now one of the leaders of the plot.

The morning of the Ides was fair spring weather. It was the festival of an ancient Italian deity, Anna Perenna, and the Field of Mars was thronged with the commonalty of the city, dancing and drinking in rude huts of boughs. Caesar had a return of his old

fever ; his wife, Calpurnia, had slept badly and had dreamed ill-omened dreams ; the auspices, too, were unfavourable, though he had never set much store by auspices ; so he sent Antony to postpone the Senate's meeting. The conspirators, with daggers in their writing-cases, were at the rendezvous at daybreak in the Colonnade of Pompey's Curia, and in case of need, Decimus Brutus had a troop of gladiators stationed in the adjoining theatre, where a performance was going on. But no Caesar appeared, and presently came Antony with news of the adjournment. The gang were in despair and dispatched one of Caesar's former lieutenants to his house to plead with him to change his mind. The mission was successful. Caesar shook off his lassitude, ordered his litter, and just before noon arrived at the Curia.

Trebonius detained Antony in conversation in the porch, for Antony's bull strength was formidable. The dictator entered the house—a little haughty and abstracted, as if his mind were on higher things than the senatorian ritual. A paper had been put into his hands by someone in the crowd, which contained the details of the plot, but he did not glance at it. The senators rose as he advanced and sat himself in his gilded chair. A petition was presented, and the conspirators clustered around him as if to press its acceptance, kissing his breast and seizing his hands. Annoyed by their importunity he attempted to rise, when one of them pulled the toga from his shoulders. This was the preconcerted signal, and Casca from behind wounded him slightly in the throat. He turned and caught his assailant's arm, and in an instant the whole pack were upon him, like hounds pulling down a deer. He was struck in the side, in the thigh, in the face, and his assailants stabbed each other in their blind fury. He covered his head with his gown in a vain effort of defence, but his frail body

CAESAR'S DEATH

was soon overpowered, and he fell dead with twenty three wounds at the base of Pompey's statue

The deed was done, and Brutus, raising aloft a dripping dagger, cried out to the ashen Cicero that liberty was restored. He began a prepared speech, but there was no one to listen, for the senators had fled. The murderers, still shrieking and babbling in their excitement, rushed out of doors, and one of them lifted up a cap of freedom on a spear and called on the people to revere the symbol. But the streets were empty. The revellers of the Anna Perenna festival had fled to their homes, the booths were closed, the theatre audience had scattered, and the gladiators of Decimus Brutus were looting far and wide. The ominous silence brought some sobriety into disordered minds. Where was Antony? Lepidus and his legion were not far off. Rome seemed to take their deed less as a liberation than as an outrage. They ran stumbling to the Capitol for refuge. Presently came three faithful slaves, who carried the dead body to Caesar's house, and, as the litter passed, men and women peeped out of their shuttered dwellings, and there was much wailing and lamentation. A little later Brutus and Cassius descended to the Forum to harangue the people, but they found that the listeners received their appeals in silence, so they hurried back to their sanctuary. As the March dusk fell Cicero visited the refugees and did his best to hearten them. He told them that all Rome rejoiced at the tyrant's death, but they had seen the faces in the streets, and disbelieved him. They begged him to go to Antony and call upon him to defend the republic, but he declined, for he knew better than to put his hand in the wolf's mouth.

Meantime, in the home on the Palatine, Calpurnia was washing the wounds of her dead husband, and Antony was grimly barricaded in his house, and

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Lepidus sat in the Forum with his avenging legion. In the Capitol the liberators continued their feverish council, every man of them twittering with nerves, now expanding in sudden outbursts of rhetoric and self-admiration, now shaken with terror and crying that all was lost. . . . They feared for themselves, but they believed that they had done with Caesar, not knowing that their folly had perfected his task and made his dreams immortal.

JOHN BUCHAN

NEW WAYS OF COLLECTING STAMPS

THE collecting of the stamps of a country, in chronological order of issue, is the earliest, and most conventional form of the hobby, which has developed, in the case of some collectors, into intensified specialised study of the stamps of a certain country or issue.

The development of the pictorial and commemorative stamp, and the tendency of our modern world to be more interested in life than in things, has given rise to a kind of horizontal collecting (as opposed to the vertical, or one-country method), which disregards geographical and political boundaries, and groups stamps in relation to their designs, inscriptions, and associations. Not everyone is thrilled by collecting for collecting's sake, and the pleasures of space-filling of the old kind have been known to pall, but there is hardly a man or woman who can fail to find some subject illustrated by stamps, in which to interest themselves.

From the historical point of view, stamps may be grouped to show political changes resulting from war or other causes. The stamps of the provinces or states of Canada, Australia, and South Africa give place to unified issues for the federated dominions.

NEW WAYS OF COLLECTING STAMPS

The petty states of Germany and Italy become the German Reich and the modern Fascist state. The colonies of Germany become territories administered, under mandate, by the victorious Allies. These and many other historic alterations can be shown by changes in stamp designs and inscriptions.

When the actual portraits and pictures on postage stamps are considered, many gaps in the world's story can be filled in. Modern countries recall their ancient history—Rome reminds us of Romulus and Remus, Julius Caesar and Augustus, Egypt, of Rameses, Cleopatra, and the builders of her ancient pyramids and temples, Persia of Darius, and Abyssinia of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

Not many of the events and personages of modern history are now outside the ken of the stamp collector, for the demand for commemorative stamps has sometimes outrun the supply of important happenings and anniversaries, and in consequence comparatively unimportant persons and events have suddenly been elevated to the publicity of the postage stamp.

Disregarding purely local events, here are a few "big stories" which may be illustrated by carefully planned collections of postage stamps :—

The History of the British Empire.

The Story of the United States.

The Life and Voyages of Columbus.

The Liberation of South America.

The Great War and the Rebuilding of Europe.

Tsarist Russia and its Fall.

The collector who sets out to form an historical collection of any kind will need to have a certain knowledge of his subject, based on a reading of something more than reference books. The necessary link between reading and postage stamps is supplied by the Stanley Gibbons Catalogues (both simplified and

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

complete), for these give, in most cases, the subjects of the stamp designs, without which the collector would be very much at sea.

The geographical side of the postage stamp is one which is stressed by many of the albums provided for the collector. There are pages for each country, and these are grouped in continents and the colonies or dependencies of each country are grouped together. So far as the various colonial empires are concerned, their connection is often emphasised by the use of stamps of a standard type for a period. Such are the numerous De La Rue key-plate types of the British Colonies, the Commerce and Navigation type of the French possessions, and the Ceres design which has been used by so many of Portugal's Colonies. Breaking away from the purely geographical limitation of country or continent many collectors have produced most attractive and striking displays by grouping the stamps which depict places in various countries so that they illustrate a world tour. Such a stamp tour may be made extraordinarily interesting, if a proper sequence is observed, and the stamps themselves are accompanied by brief notes about the places depicted on them.

These stamp views are not confined to famous buildings, statues, and memorials, but include some of the world's most magnificent scenery—mountains, glaciers, waterfalls, rivers, lakes, and seascapes—views beautiful in the miniature form in which they appear to the unaided eye, but often still more charming when seen under the magnifying glass.

Once we are started on this world tour, there is no limit to the stamps which may be included, even though we do not keep within the covers of the geography book. Many countries of the world have used their stamps to show us something of the races which people them, and of their life and work. In

NEW WAYS OF COLLECTING STAMPS

backward countries the natives are seen doing crude tasks by hand, while on the stamps of modern commercial states huge factories and mills are pictured—and, it may be added, the contrast seems all in favour of the “backward” native with his primitive methods.

From the races of the world it is only a step to the birds and beasts, and a zoological collection is probably the most popular of the “side-line” groups. The fauna of the world have been so freely illustrated on stamps that a wonderful array can be got together, which will include many out of the way species. Insects are not too well represented, as yet, but there are quite a few reptiles.

The botanist, too, is liberally catered for. Even where the central design of a stamp does not show a tree, plant, or flower, the artist will often use a spray or a flower as a fill-up for side or corner, so that a hawk-like eye is needed if the full range of stamp-botany is to be covered.

When making his world tour, the collector will not be altogether unprovided with maps and charts, as were so many of the early explorers in whose tracks he must follow, for there are quite a few miniature maps on stamps. As for means of transport, he will find in the stamp album a range of vehicles sufficient to give him, in themselves, the subject for a collection. If he wishes to voyage on water, he has the choice of every type of vessel, from canoe and coracle, through sailing ships of all types, to the modern ocean greyhound. On land, he may go afoot, on horse or mule back, in a litter, in wagons and carriages of all kinds, on motor-bike or motor-car, or by rail. In the air, there are 'planes of all kinds awaiting him, and balloons and airships differing from one another as widely as did the first dirigible gas bag of Santos Dumont from the *Graf Zeppelin*.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Our sections here overlap, for many stamps which find a place in a "transport" collection can also properly be included in an engineering collection. Stamp pictures include views of many famous canals, bridges, harbours, railways, and aqueducts, while if we add the work of the builder to that of the engineer, there are cathedrals, government buildings, post offices, lighthouses, wireless stations, and other erections (It is quite an interesting study to take a cross-section of the world's stamps to show the various types of architecture, the modern buildings being contrasted with the ancient, and the civilised with the native huts and kraals which are also depicted on stamps.)

The engineering section may also include a few stamp portraits of famous engineers, such as General Goethals, who was finally responsible for the completion of the Panama Canal, and this mention of portrait stamps brings us to a wider subject, the men and women of the stamp album.

In the early days of the postage stamp, the portrait of the monarch or other ruler was regarded as the natural subject for stamp designs. This was probably due to the association of stamps with coinage in the minds of those who produced them. Here and there a country made a self-denying ordinance, and forbade the appearance of its living rulers on its stamps. Chile, for example, would, for many years, have no portrait but that of Columbus on her stamps, while to this day only *dead* Presidents may be portrayed on the stamps of the United States. It was a natural vanity which made a President of some small republic (whose term of office, as he well knew, might be a very short one) wish to go down to posterity on the stamps of his country, and it was with an equally natural feeling of pleasure that the successors of some of these Presidents blotted out the stamp portraits of their predecessors.

NEW WAYS OF COLLECTING STAMPS

A modern example is afforded by the order of Shah Pehlevi of Persia, on his accession, which instructed that the stamps then in use, which bore the portrait of his predecessor, should not pass through the post unless the likeness was thoroughly obliterated, with the result that adhesive paper, burnt cork, and other materials were employed to hide the ex-Shah, the zeal of the postal employé being apparently measured by the completeness with which he blotted out the offending visage.

With the coming of the commemorative stamp, it was natural that the honour of portrayal on stamps should be extended to famous figures of the past and, in some special cases, to living men, and it is thus possible to form collections of stamp portraits illustrating various human activities, these being supplemented, in many cases, by pictorial stamps connected with their work.

Apart from the world's rulers, whose stamp portraits provide material for a collection, there are a number of persons whose activities have been mainly political,—dictators, liberators, and lesser fry, the latter in many cases so unimportant that it is extremely difficult to find out any details of their life-story.

More interesting than these are the explorers, whose portraits might well find a place in a geographical collection, though they form an equally suitable subject for a special display. Most popular of these, with the stamp designer, is Christopher Columbus, whose life and adventures have been the subject of numerous stamp issues from countries on both sides of the Atlantic. There is hardly an important incident in the life of the great discoverer which has not formed the subject of a stamp design. Captain Cook is another popular figure, while the names of Pizarro, Balboa, Magellan, Cabot, La Perouse and others give the album its flavour of adventure, which

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

may be continued and expanded if the collector adds to his explorers the generals and admirals of the stamp world, and the many views of battles by land and sea, which are found on stamps. Most of the generals seem to be shown on stamps in a political capacity,—Grant, for example, as a President of the United States,—but the admirals include Nelson (though only as a statue), Cochrane, who fought for Greece and Chile, after falling foul of the British Admiralty, Sir Edward Codrington, who commanded the Allied fleets which destroyed the Turkish navy at Navarino, Farragut, the first admiral of the U.S. Navy, and others.

Apart from these “official” warriors, the stamp portrait gallery shows us a host of patriots of many nations who have fought for their countries’ independence; in fact “the story of liberty” would make a good subject for a stamp collection planned with a little imagination and knowledge, for there are not only the portrait stamps, but others which show declarations of independence, street fighting, formal battles, councils, meetings of conspirators, and all the usual paraphernalia of revolt.

There are also several “subject collections” which may be formed in connection with more peaceful pursuits. Literature, for example, is well represented by interesting commemorative stamps with which various countries have delighted to honour their famous sons.

King Solomon is not commemorated on stamps as a writer, but his throne appears on some of the issues of Abyssinia. (In making a subject collection, one must be ready to strain a point and bring in even indirect connections with persons or places which cannot be immediately associated with the subject in hand.) Julius Caesar appears on stamps of Italy, Dante and Manzoni also, not to mention saints and apostles, who

NEW WAYS OF COLLECTING STAMPS

are portrayed for other reasons than that of authorship. St Paul, too, will be found on the stamps of Malta. France gives us the poet Ronsard, Germany Goethe, Spain Cervantes, Hungary Petöfi and Maurus Jokai, Norway Ibsen, Denmark Hans Andersen, Fiume D'Annunzio, Portugal Camoens and Branco, Poland Sienkiewicz of *Quo Vadis* fame, Samoa Robert Louis Stevenson, and Austria a whole series of authors, poets, and playwrights, not very well known outside that country.

Nor are some countries content with honouring the man alone, for the whole diverting story of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza is pictured for us on the Cervantes issue of Spain; Portugal illustrates characters from the works of Branco and incidents from the life of Camoens; while Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* and the tales of the Bulgarian Vazoff also have stamp illustrations.

There are, too, a number of authors who have appeared on stamps in other capacities—King James I and Francis Bacon on the Cabot series of Newfoundland, "Carmen Sylva" of Roumania and her niece Queen Marie, and quite a number of others. A literary collection might also be extended to include stamps depicting scenes and events which have been mentioned in famous works of fiction, though this is, perhaps, going rather far.

The whole contents of the stamp album come within the realm of Art, for there are few stamps in the production of which some artist, however humble, has not collaborated. Quite a few stamp designs—particularly those devoted to historic scenes—and many portraits, are reproduced from paintings and there are a number of stamp reproductions of really famous works of art. As examples, a fresco by Michelangelo is shown on stamps of Libya, paintings by Dyckmans and Raphael have found a place on

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

stamps of the Saar, Rembrandt and one of his masterpieces appear on a Dutch issue, and Belgium has perpetuated designs by the famous war cartoonist Raemaekers. Collectors interested in art have made a considerable study of the story of the artists and engravers responsible for stamp designs and the subject is a fascinating one.

Sculpture, good and bad, is plentiful in the pages of a stamp album. On the stamps of Greece there are beautiful reproductions of statues by Praxiteles, Peonias and other masters, and from them we can turn to conventional representations of modern warriors and politicians, or to the crude images of native ju-jus and idols.

Music is fairly well represented on stamps. The stamp orchestra must be culled from many countries, and will be a varied one. Many of the instruments only appear on stamps incidentally and will take some searching for, often with a magnifying glass.

When we think of composers, we naturally turn to the Austrian charity stamps of 1922, a wonderfully engraved series of portraits, which includes Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, Strauss, and Hugo Wolf. Germany adds Bach and Wagner stamps. Poland has given us portraits of Paderewski and Chopin—the former in his political capacity—while Czecho-Slovakia has honoured Dvořák and Smetana. So far, we have no stamp commemorating any of the famous "Kings of Jazz," but doubtless their turn will come !

The scientists and inventors might almost be grouped with our engineering section, already referred to above. Here we should find the astronomer Copernicus (Poland), the radio pioneer Popoff (Russia), Volta (after whom the volt is named) and Galvani, on stamps of Italy, Pasteur and Berthelot (France), and many others.

NEW WAYS OF COLLECTING STAMPS

The progress made possible by the work of such men is also sometimes indicated on stamps. Thus the United States has recorded for us the scene of the successful trip of Fulton's early steamboat, the *Clermont*, and has also claimed for Edison the invention of electric light.

On stamps of the 1902 issue of the Dominican Republic, the central portrait is flanked by designs indicating progress. The Indian runner is contrasted with the telegraph, the horseman with the locomotive, the torch-bearer with electric light, and the sailing ship with the modern liner. The same theme has been worked out, with variations, in other stamp issues.

The religions of the world form the subject of an interesting side-line collection. The gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome will be found on numerous stamps, while Egypt has not altogether forgotten her deities when designing her stamps. Some of the Eastern religions are recalled by stamps of the Indian Native States, Japan and other countries, though sometimes the only reminder is a picture of a temple or shrine. Mythology, too, is the occasional subject of stamp designs, and legendary birds and beasts add variety to the album pages.

Christianity has its representatives mainly in the pictured lives of the saints, St. Francis, St. Anthony, St. Benedict, and others having been honoured with special series. Italy has given us stamps illustrating the ceremonies of the "Holy Year," and there are a number of churches and cathedrals on stamps. The Maltese stamps showing the shipwreck of St. Paul have already been mentioned, and the stamp portrait of his host on that occasion, St. Publius, afterwards first Bishop of Malta, should not be overlooked on the later 1s. 6d. stamps of the island. Of equal interest is the 2½ piastre stamp of the 1928 Jubilee issue of Cyprus,

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

which reproduces a quaint old picture which shows the finding of the body of St. Barnabas.

A number of scenes of biblical history may be found on stamps of Syria and Great Lebanon, not to mention the few views of the Holy Land which adorn its stamps. These are poorly designed, and we still wait for an issue from Palestine which shall do justice to its wonderful story.

Students of heraldry will find it possible to form an extensive collection of stamps bearing arms, badges, and devices, often more attractive to the eye than accurate to an extent which would satisfy the College of Heralds, but none the less interesting on that account.

A few coins are reproduced on stamps, but not sufficient for it to be possible to claim that a serious collection can be formed.

One collection which must not be overlooked is that of sports stamps. The craze for commemorating every event of importance has naturally been extended to include the various international Olympic meetings, and Greece, Holland, Belgium, Hungary, France, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Cuba, Germany, U.S.A., and others have issued sets showing either the old Olympic Games of ancient Greece, or modern sportsmen of various kinds. Czecho-Slovakia overprinted stamps to signalise an international Olympic Congress and also a congress of the "Sokols" or national athletic associations.

Twice in comparatively recent times has Uruguay won the "Soccer" contest at the Olympic Games and on each occasion a special issue of stamps has been part of the welcome to her victorious team. The 1924 set shows the famous statue, the "Victory" of Samothrace, but in 1924, the artist, who had probably never seen a football match, surpassed himself in ingenuity. He showed a set of goal posts, but these

PENGUINS

are made of trunks of trees, with luxuriant foliage and flowers growing from them. On the cross-bar is balanced a football, and on the ball is perched a bird, which flaps and crows a welcome to the team.

A few field sports are pictured on stamps. The Cabot issue of Newfoundland describes three of its values as illustrative of sports which might be enjoyed in the (then) colony—caribou hunting, ptarmigan shooting, and salmon fishing—and other countries have, directly or indirectly, added to the “sporting print” section of the stamp album.

It is a tribute to the breadth of our hobby that there are very few branches of human interest and knowledge which cannot be in some way illuminated by postage stamps. By design, by association, by contrast, and by inscription, every stamp or group of stamps has its story to tell, and the collector who gets most fun out of the hobby is he, or she, who has the fullest appreciation of what lies behind the stamp and who does not merely treat it as just one more specimen to be added to a numerical score.

STANLEY PHILLIPS

PENGUINS

SINCE the extinction of the great auk there are no longer any non-flying birds in the North, but in the South some eight or ten varieties of penguins still represent that curious type of life which possesses the form of a bird without powers of flight, and their characteristics are so unusual that they deserve some mention. Only two of these varieties are truly polar in that they spend the whole of their lives either on the pack ice or on the shores of the continent. Before an exploring ship has got far

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

into the pack ice the ship's company will be vastly amused by seeing a flurry in the water close to a floe and one or more desperately fussy little old gentlemen leaping out of the water on to the ice, falling flat on their stomachs, but immediately picking themselves up and hurrying towards the ship. Dressed immaculately in evening dress, with white waistcoat and black coat, somewhat unsteady on their short legs, and therefore balancing themselves with their stiff arms, they strike one at once as having far more human characteristics than any other bird, and one unconsciously gives them mental attributes to suit. These are the little Adélie penguins, about two feet in height and about fifteen to twenty pounds in weight, and they swarm literally in millions round the whole Antarctic continent, spending the winter on the open pack ice and the summer at their breeding haunts, or "rookeries," on some flat point free from snow, and living almost entirely upon the little red crustaceans known as euphausia. Possibly because there are few bare patches of gravel on that continent, but more probably because of an innately gregarious habit of mind, their rookeries number almost millions of individuals. Whole books have been written about their habits, and we must be content here with but a few instances.

Their sole enemy is the sea-leopard, which attacks them only in the water, and even then it is not certain that he can always catch them; the consequence is that they are quite fearless on land or ice and will march up to a man with an air of curiosity and an expression of "You're a mighty big penguin, but I am not in the least afraid." They certainly think twice before they enter the water from the rookery, because bitter experience has taught them that their enemy lurks under the ice, waiting for just

PENGUINS

such careless divers. So if a penguin wants to go out fishing he will settle himself on the edge of the ice-foot and wait patiently for companions, who will turn up by twos or threes, all equally averse from taking the first plunge. If no member of the party can be persuaded by ordinary means, a jostling begins amongst them which sooner or later will end in one being edged over into the water. As soon as that happens the rest peer anxiously to see whether he comes up, and, if so, they all dive in a body after him. If he does not come up, presumably they send a message to the widow and postpone their bathe. Thus they have certain attributes of the genus *larrikin*, but, when analysed, there is generally some reason to explain such behaviour. For instance, their nests are made laboriously by collecting pebbles and laying them in a mound, on top of which the eggs are laid without any lining to the nest whatever.

One would say at first sight that pebbles up to an inch in diameter were hardly preferable to bare gravel itself, but the penguin has found that such a mound is the only way to keep the eggs out of the reach of the water from a strong thaw. His collection of pebbles is definitely a private possession of considerable value, since he can carry only one pebble at a time and may have to go several hundred yards for each one. Accordingly, one of his methods of wooing appears to be the gesture of laying a pebble at the feet of his intended, presumably on the principle that a good pebble betokens a good husband. Further, since the nests are built so close together that the sitting birds can almost reach each other, a penguin, in order to reach his or her nest, has to pass literally hundreds of other nests 'heaped with fine, nobbly pebbles. The result is that the temptation is too great, and the pilfering of pebbles from each other's nests is a universal habit on the rookery,

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

leading to much bickering, if not to real riots, because if only a small difference of opinion commences in amongst the nests, both thief and avenger will wreck the nests they pass by kicking pebbles down. The incidents arising from this habit, which have a human significance, are, of course, legion, and at the same time show some of their mental limitations. One penguin, for instance, having built a nest, decided that he would shift it about ten yards, which meant a whole day's work carrying each pebble singly to the new place. As each pebble was deposited and the labourer turned his back, a neighbouring penguin picked up the pebble and added it to his nest, but the householder never noticed that his house was disappearing brick by brick, and when at the end of the day he had no nest at all he merely seemed grieved and sat disconsolate for several hours.

The young penguins, usually two to a nest, are born to a life which at first consists merely of sleeping, gobbling up crustacea from their mother's beak, and growing fat. Presumably the short season requires this rapid growth and entails a curious habit amongst the older penguins, for as soon as the young ones can stray from their nest it requires both parents' best efforts to keep them fed, and the result is then that at a certain stage a few of the older birds are left on guard amongst the mobs of young ones while all the rest are engaged in filling their crops with food for the young. It soon becomes quite impossible for the parent to find its own young, and it is chased by the nearest group of young ones and pestered till, in desperation, it disgorges the food into those mouths which are most urgent with their shrill appeal. Even so there are still too many young ones for the united efforts of all the parents, and the inevitable result is that those which are less active in chasing the adults for food or less persistent

PENGUINS

in their cries begin to lose strength and the will to live. Indeed, the predatory skua finds that this stage of the penguin's breeding gives him a myriad opportunities of food, and he has but to wait till some youngster, tired of the ceaseless chasing after food and weary of life in general, wanders away from the guards and from its hateful companions. Then comes a rapid swoop and a quick death to the luckless penguin who has lost in his struggle for survival amongst his fellows.

Those who survive are taught to swim in due course by a few adult birds, and swim away with them in the autumn to winter on the pack ice. Such is the life of the Adélie penguin, curiously adapted to the strange conditions, but that of the other Antarctic penguin is stranger still.

The Emperor penguin, which stands over three feet in height and weighs up to ninety pounds, is, perhaps, the most curious bird in the world. His colouring is rather remarkable, for, instead of the plain white and black of the little Adélie, he has a lemon-yellow chest going through orange up his neck to a brilliant crimson on his beak, and, lacking the white surround to the eye of the smaller bird, he loses something of their similarity to humans. He, too, has no enemies ashore, and his walk is stately, as befits an emperor ; his manners are also imperial, if that means deep bows to each other on meeting and yet a certain haughtiness in a group when a strange bird arrives. He, too, could quite easily, as far as we humans can understand, arrange his breeding season for the south in the summer and swim away to the north for the winter ; but he does no such thing.

Early in July the Emperors assemble on some sheltered piece of bay ice, which must have two attributes : it must be firm enough not to drift

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

away during the winter, and yet weak enough to break up and float off quite early in the summer. There on the bare ice the eggs are laid with no pretence at a nest, and, as soon as laid, the hooked beak is used to hustle the egg on to the broad black feet, and the incubation is done under a curious flap of skin like an inverted pouch. The chicks, when hatched, are also kept from the cold by being kept in the same place. It must be remembered that at this time of year in the South the gales are almost continuous, the temperature is rarely higher than minus 30° Fahrenheit, and there is complete darkness. Under such conditions Nature has to provide that all the birds of the colony shall have an urgent longing to incubate, for an egg or a chick left about in the open for a few minutes in a blizzard at a low temperature will be lost for ever. Nature's object is, however, not always attained, for the desire is so great that if a chick or an egg is left for an instant it is pounced upon by the nearest three or four birds, whose beaks and whose weight will do the damage even more effectively than the conditions from which they are striving to protect their young.

The excessive zeal of these bulky foster-mothers seems to be the chief reason for the extremely high mortality in the young rather than the extraordinary season of the year, to the rigours of which they are so early exposed. Those that do survive the many mischances of such an upbringing are not sufficiently advanced in plumage or in strength to be able to swim until well into the succeeding summer, and the parents provide for this by arranging that the half-grown young shall sail away to the north on the bay ice as it breaks up in the spring or early summer. The process of setting out on such an insecure raft has been watched, but, on the whole, we do not know very much about the interesting habits of

PENGUINS

these strange birds, on account of the difficulty of reaching them at that season. A very notable journey was made by Dr. Wilson on the last Scott expedition, together with two companions, to visit and study the Emperors in the depth of winter, which nearly cost the lives of all the party, and the difficulty in reaching the rookery was so great that only one visit could be paid and only three whole eggs recovered. These eggs, the only ones known to science, now repose in the British Museum. Such habits do not strike one as being very suitable even for so tough a bird as the Emperor, but it may, after all, be only foresight on the part of the parents, who, knowing that their young will be exposed to open water conditions before the summer is over, have put forward the season of incubation so that they shall be old enough to cope with these conditions when they arise.

There is one peculiarity about penguins which distinguishes them from all other sea birds, and that is that they have a thick layer of blubber between the skin and the body precisely similar to that of seals and whales. It is interesting to speculate whether this is a normal result of their seeking their food in the same way or whether it is merely Nature's protection from cold for a creature which lacks the power of flight. More generally still, one may seek to divine whether the land animals of the North have been forced to adapt themselves to the conditions by overcrowding elsewhere, or whether they deliberately chose those conditions. The probable answer is that both statements may have been true at different times.

FRANK DEBENHAM

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

SIR WALTER SCOTT

[An address delivered to the Scott Society in Edinburgh on December 5, 1924, during Lord Birkenhead's presidency]

MY LORD PROVOST, MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I must, I think, justify my presence here at the outset by making one practical observation such as I hope may be heard with patience by Scots. The Society over which I preside to-night is one which reflects credit upon that fidelity to the great men of the past which has for long distinguished your folk. It is, believe me, a society which deserves the support of the citizens of Edinburgh, and I hope, occupying the position of President, that I may be allowed to urge upon those here to-night, in the happy capacity of irresponsible guests, that they should hasten to become members of the Society, and by doing so both reinforce its finances and contribute some further distinction to the memory of the greatest of Scottish writers, who had also some larger claims of which I will speak hereafter

When I was asked to become President of a club which is already ancient, I accepted the invitation, as was indeed natural, but not without trepidation, for it seemed to me that this club must from the very nature of the case consist mainly of Scots, and that he who presides over such a club should naturally and normally be a Scot ; but I corrected a view which was perhaps somewhat timidly formed by recalling a remark which your old friend and admirer Dr. Johnson made in reply to one who was putting the prerogative of the Crown very high. The line was quoted, "Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free" ; Dr. Johnson said, "Sir, I cannot agree with you. It might as well be said : 'Who drives

SIR WALTER SCOTT

fat oxen should himself be fat.' ” So I was led to believe, encouraged by your considered invitation, that he who leads Scottish admirers of Sir Walter Scott might, at least for the period of twelve months, be permitted to be an Englishman

My incapacity for the task could not be more plainly exhibited than by the fact that I was constrained to-night to refuse even perfunctory tribute to the noble national dish which graced your table ; but, on the other hand, I may claim what I think few in this room can assert, that, before I went to Oxford more than thirty years ago, I had read every one of Scott's novels at least three times ; and I do not believe that one quinquennium has passed without my re-reading them all within the period. And I can make the further claim that, without ever having been supported by any resource of wealth, having always to consider and reconsider any extravagance at the bookseller's, I possess to-day a first edition of all Scott's poems and a first edition of all Scott's novels, including the rare *Waverley*, though not, unhappily, clad in its original boards

And indeed it would be a view very incomplete of the genius of that revered figure, whom to-night we celebrate, if it were to be supposed that he was only a Scottish hero. It is a common experience that English politicians or public men who address Scottish audiences are corrected for too frequent a reference to a not unworthy, but an incomplete adjective—I mean the word “English.” I may, perhaps, retort upon this occasion that to claim Scott as purely Scottish would be doing a wrong to the memory of a very versatile and most complete citizen of the Empire. When I look back upon his career, upon his teaching, upon the inspiration which he has breathed for so many years into the youth of the Empire, I think of him rather as a great Briton. I

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

recall that over a period of years charged with crisis, not only to the fortunes of Scotland, but to the fortunes of that Empire in which Scotland is a shining unit, there was none more eloquent, none more untiring, in his presentation of the national case against the tyranny of the Napoleonic system than Walter Scott

Nor were the reverberations and the reactions of his message confined to this country of Scotland. They found readers and made converts the whole world over. Congruously, therefore, with the teachings of which he was the eloquent, and at times almost the inspired mouthpiece, I recall the lines which thrilled not only Scotland but England when the astonishing career of the younger Pitt was prematurely closed :—

“ The trumpet’s silver sound is still,
The Warden silent on the hill.”

We look back, as we must so many years after his death, in cool, passionless review over the career of a great man of letters. It is sometimes helpful, it is sometimes reasonable, to examine him who is the subject of your thought as a man as well as a writer ; sometimes (though not always) it is even kinder. The shades, the phantoms of François Villon, Benvenuto Cellini, Byron, and Oscar Wilde are entitled to urge that they should be considered, and should be considered mainly, as artists by posterity. The claim is fairly well founded, though Byron could make a distinguishable case.

When a human being has contributed something of genius, something permanent and vital, to human thought and to human art, he is entitled to claim that the generations which follow shall extirpate from their minds recollections, however grave and painful, of any human infirmity which may have

SIR WALTER SCOTT

disfigured his career. For art is one thing and morals quite another. The contribution of the artist is not to be disparaged by the recollection or the arraignment of ethical frailty. But when we deal, as it is our happiness to deal to-night, with one whose life and example were as pure and as admirable as were those of Walter Scott, it is reasonable to begin the attempt to understand what he was, and what he stood for, by some appraisement, however slightly attempted, of his qualities as a man.

I do not know—and I choose my words carefully, not applying them without earlier reflection—I do not know of the career of any great man of letters more consistent, simpler, nobler, braver, than the career of Walter Scott. It made, inevitably made, when once the brilliancy of his literary equipment was realised, a strong and lasting appeal to the loyalty and admiration of the Scottish people. In every bone, in every fibre of his inmost being, he was Scottish. He was sprung from the loins of men who had ridden hotly in many a mad foray, in many a bloody raid. I cannot doubt that had he been free to determine his own career, had he not suffered almost from childhood from depressing physical ailments, he would have wished for himself, responding to the blood that flowed through his veins, the career of a man of action or, as he might have said, of *derring do*.

You have been reminded to-night of the words in which that great soldier, Wolfe, stated at a supreme moment of his career—one of the great moments in history, a moment which was to determine the future of the British Empire, perhaps even the civilisation of the western continents—that he would rather have written the noble words of Gray's *Elegy* than have stormed Quebec. To me it seems on the whole probable that, approaching such a choice

from an inverted angle, Scott would have sacrificed the whole of his poetry, the whole of the Waverley novels, could he have stood, a Scottish soldier, in one of those squares at Waterloo which faced unconquered and unconquerable the bitter succession of French assaults.

As I look back upon that kindly and meritorious life (for I am talking of him at this moment not in relation to his literary quality, but as a Scottish citizen and Scottish gentleman), I like to think of him (and to me this may be conceded as a Scots lawyer of late admission) first as Sheriff and then, dignified and courteous, as Clerk of the Court, serving through the long years without salary, but with the reasonable hope of reversion to an office which he greatly valued and, in the end, unobtrusively adorned.

I recall Sir Walter Scott, great poet, great master of romantic imagination, dining with the *douce* lawyers; sharing with sly enjoyment those conceptions of legal pleasantries which do not always appeal to laymen; and not shrinking from the warm and generous potations which have frequently confounded the weaker heads of legal guests. I recall, too, the bitter and, as it seemed, the deep-seated rupture of his first romance in vivid youth. Alas! most of us are old enough to know that romantic wounds are, in the main, curable, and most of them—a saying harsh to youth—within a fugitive period. Therefore the tears which, had we not known what was to be—the exquisite happiness of his actual marriage—we might have expended on his failure to indulge the first passion of vehement youth, may be arrested, superfluous and unshed.

When I think of that period in his career, I like also to re-create the man in the eye of my mind as success gradually enabled him to become a laird

SIR WALTER SCOTT

and a proprietor of land. Such an ~~advancement~~ was evidently always in his mind. He could never resist buying a farm. He must always be adding to his acres. And I recall his incredible labours, rendered tolerable, I suspect, by this land hunger. He rose, as you know, to begin his writing at five o'clock in the morning. He wrote standing always, after he became Laird of Abbotsford, because "he had enough sitting in the discharge of his duties." He wrote—tirelessly, infinitely, beautifully—until failing health made it physically impossible for him to write more. Every word of these unforgettable novels was in his own delicate and exquisite handwriting. I had an opportunity of examining, thirty years ago, many of the manuscripts which the late Mr. Ruskin treasured in that library which looked upon the delightful waters of Coniston.

It is hard indeed in these days, when writers of the greatest eminence summon a stenographer, to be followed in the background by a typist, to realise the actual physical labour which was necessary in order that this sincere and untiring craftsman might produce the great work of years which we know as the Waverley Novels. I ask attention to the courage and resource of the man. When he was already well advanced in the fifties, by no fault, as you know, of his own, except that a very much occupied man was generously—almost disdainfully—careless of his own interests, he had the misfortune to become involved through the negligence (I use to-night no harsher term) of the Ballantynes and Constables in pecuniary embarrassments which to any other living man than Scott would have seemed to be insoluble and even desperate. When the accounts were fully adjusted, it became evident that the irregularities of those whom he had trusted, assisted by his own recklessness, had involved him in liabilities amount-

ing to more than £100,000. In a staggering and poignant moment he displayed a reserve of courage, and a moral resilience, which were not exceeded in physical dourness by any of his soldier-ancestors

He devoted himself forthwith to the task of extinguishing that debt; and I need only remind you that at the time when he sustained this most grave—as it must have seemed, this irretrievable—blow he was already conscious of a sharpness of disease sometimes driving him from the dinner table with screams of pain which even his strong courage could not conquer. Nor was that weakness any new thing. Scott's earliest recollections were of lying on the floor, wrapped in the skin of a newly killed sheep and being enticed by his grandfather to crawl painfully towards him. His deformity did not prevent the enjoyment of fair general health in youth and middle age. He possessed, indeed, considerable muscular power in boyhood and early manhood, but as early as 1817 he was a martyr to violent internal pains, and when *Ivanhoe* appeared, his suffering was so constantly acute that his amanuensis, frightened by his moans, would beg him to stop dictating, only to be told, "See that the doors are fast; I would fain keep all the cry, as well as the wool, to ourselves. As to giving up the work, that can only be when I am in woollen."

Such was the man, such the feebleness of his health, while he spent himself inexorably upon the last task of all. In those years, by a prodigy of exertion never exceeded even by the incredibly industrious novelists of France, Hugo, Balzac, Dumas, and Zola, he repaid, before he died, the creditors (only in the moral field *his* creditors) £62,000 of the total obligation; and when his copyrights were finally disposed of, when the last contribution was made by the second greatest biographer whom these

SIR WALTER SCOTT

islands have ever produced, his devoted son-in-law, Lockhart, the uttermost penny of an indebtedness, in those days immense, was discharged.

In this matter neither Scott nor his publishers have escaped censure. The issue indeed was not entirely one-sided. Scott may have reposed unwise, because excessive, trust in the men who linked him with the great reading public; his rashness in assuming personal responsibility for heavy bills due by his firm was of a piece with the impetuosity of his character; Lockhart may have overstated Scott's ignorance of the ramifications of business, and must (I think) have turned a half-closed eye to the large drafts his father-in-law drew for building and other current expenses. The systematic method of bill-discounting was well open to reproach. Scott's own words cannot be overlooked: "I owe it to Ballantyne to say that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me." All this, and perhaps more, can be, and has been, quite justly alleged; the shield without a shadow belongs only to the realms of fancy. But even those who attribute a full—and probably an undue—measure of blame to Scott for many things which conduced to the crash of 1825, agree that his subsequent handling of his affairs was heroic. Bankruptcy, with its coat of financial white-wash, suggested itself—and was suggested to him—as an easy way of dealing with his creditors, who on the whole showed leniency and courtesy; bankruptcy would have done nothing to dull Scott's literary fame, and little to disturb his normal life. But the ruined old man waved it away. "I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination, to find diamonds to make good my engagements and not to enrich myself."

Apart from the feeling evidently prevalent that the failure of a great national hero to satisfy his

obligations would have been treason to his whole conception of life, it is pleasant, and not amiss, to note at this crisis the attitude of those who touched Scott's life most nearly. His daughter's music-master asked to contribute all his savings towards the deficit ; Sir William Forbes, familiar friend and successful rival in his first love-affair, settled a demand of £2000 which might have involved arrest, and kept the transaction secret ; the old farmer, Laidlaw, who was perforce ejected by the trustees from his holding, came every week to walk and talk with his patron ; the coachman became ploughman-in-ordinary ; the butler halved his wages and doubled his work ; and there was not a former dependent who did not exhibit the same tokens of loyal affection.

Even in these days when writers reap large rewards, one finds it difficult to realise that Walter Scott amassed, by his exertions, a bondsman in the service of those to whom he was debtor, over £40,000 between January 1826, and January 1828. His almost incredible labours undoubtedly shortened—if they did not end—his life. In 1829 his symptoms seriously alarmed his friends ; a year later came a swift stroke of paralysis. Still he clung grimly, almost desperately, to pen, ink, and paper. The time, he saw, was short. There was still much ground to be regained. He laboured on, and his labours fell in quality little below their former level. Then, with the second numbing stroke, a veil began slowly to drop across the tired memory ; he became possessed—did Providence ever permit a happier delusion?—of the idea that his debts were paid ; that his commercial honour was vindicated ; and that he was free to go and do as he pleased. The physicians recommended a sea-voyage ; he had hitherto been deaf to all entreaties that he would

SIR WALTER SCOTT

rest the weak body and relax the overstrained mind. Now foreign scenes and climates beckoned alluringly to him ; the Government placed a vessel at his disposal, and for more than a year there was pure enjoyment in a cruise on the Mediterranean waters, and in visiting places of absorbing interest. But when the end was drawing near, Scotland and the "misty sheelings" irresistibly claimed him, and with imperious will-power he insisted on being carried across Europe to die where he lived, and was loved, at Abbotsford.

He was a great Scot, a great gentleman, a great Briton ; and there would be justification in his example to the youth of Scotland and England, had he never written a word which the reasoned judgment of posterity pronounced to be worthy of survival, for the existence of your club and for the admiration which year by year you show to the memory this illustrious man

But there were other sides of him which are intimately in the minds of all of you to-night. I ask leave to say of him a few words first in the capacity of poet ; and then to make some observations upon that astonishing series of novels which I am persuaded will endure as long as the English language is spoken or written.

I have often read of the contemporary impression which was made by the appearance of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. It created a sensation on both sides of the Border as great as that produced by the fundamentally different work, upon the publication of which it was said that in one night Byron woke up and found himself famous. Many explanations might be made, if the right attitude of mind is indeed to require an explanation, of the swift and sudden success of Scott's work. Let me attempt one or two. In the first place, there was a treasure-house of

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

material for him who had the observation to discern and the genius to exploit it, lying hid in the romantic periods of Scottish history, which up to that time had almost entirely escaped the industry or the attention of your Scottish poets. Indeed, it is not one of the smallest services which he rendered to literature, and to the history and national traditions of Scotland, that he most clearly saw that not only was there here a vast and inexhaustibly rich subject-matter, but that it was one which lent itself in particular degree to the special gift which he alone possessed.

Contemporary literature was not rich in poets to whose genius it could reasonably be hoped that such a romantic topic would make a promising appeal. The world had passed far beyond the smooth, barbed, artificial alexandrines of the period of Pope ; Cowper, with all his finesse and tact, with all his homely intimacy of sympathy and perception, lived in another age ; Coleridge had neither found his audience nor attained the full stature of his genius ; and suddenly there arose in this small country of yours, with a population relatively insignificant, one of the consummate ballad-makers of the world.

Higher praise cannot very easily be given to a poet. It may be a more sonorous eulogy to aver that such a one is a master of poignant tragedy ; of another that his art has conquered the very spirit of exquisite lyric ; but to claim for a poet, who comes himself of a martial race, that he has reproduced in stirring poesy the soul of a fighting people ; has re-created the traditions and personalities of an age, vanished indeed, but to be born and reborn in the passage of the centuries—this is a tribute to Scott which, had he never set pen to prose, would still leave him high among the Immortals of song.

I have often thought, though the relatively abrupt

SIR WALTER SCOTT

metre which Scott adopted suffers, as an instrument of heroic exposition, in comparison with the majestic, flexible, and musical hexameters of Homer, that he belongs none the less to the men who were labourers in that school of Greek ballad-art which, if the theories of modern scholars be well founded, produced, as a result of composite effort, those matchless efforts of genius which many of us still choose to associate with a single name.

I cannot doubt that Walter Scott was of the spirit and company of those gay and vivid troubadours who journeyed through the ballad-loving cities of Greece, singing their sweet songs beneath its violet skies. William of Deloraine, Roderick Dhu, the Last Minstrel, the Duchess of Buccleuch—name after name springs to mind when one thinks of the remarkable technique, marred here and there perhaps by an element of crudity, but redeemed by an artistry which is only realised after repeated and painstaking analysis.

I am sure that there has been no poet since Scott wrote who has taught so attractively to adventurous youth the story and the gallantry of the past ; who has taught it more to the profit of the present ; more to the hope of the future. I am sufficiently a believer in the teaching of Scott to be sure that neither is this world now, nor hereafter will it be, an easy world to live in. I have never been able to persuade myself that the arms of the strong will not again and again be required by Britain in the years that lie in front of us. Let us by all means devote every influence of which we are masters to avoid war ; but do not let us be so blind to the teachings of history as to believe that great possessions will be permitted in the future of the world to soft peoples. They never have been ; they never will be. I incurred some censure in a speech which I made at Glasgow a

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

year ago, and which was only liable to censure (if at all) because it contained so many platitudes. It was an address founded upon the philosophy and teaching of Sir Walter Scott.

I for one believe, recalling the unforgettable achievements of so many Scottish soldiers in the crucible of that war through which we have so lately passed—recalling the glorious part they played, to take one example among many, in that unhappy battle of Loos in which the largest Scottish army marched which has ever assembled under one banner—that we must realise how much the soldierly spirit of a race naturally martial has been nourished by Walter Scott. Scotland, by her supreme efforts, surpassed her own exalted traditions. She stood four-square, the equal comrade of England, of Canada, of Australia. //

I pass in natural order to the subject of SCOTT'S novels. No more interesting literary chapter has ever been written than that concerned with the anonymity which he preserved over so long a period of years. In one of the introductions—I think it is the introduction to *Waverley* (I speak from memory)—he discussed the ethics of anonymous production, and the honourable obligation of an author, who, deliberately choosing to withhold his name, is asked point-blank whether or not he is in fact the author of his book. Scott argues, in the first place, that a man is entitled to protect his own secret in such a case; and, in the second, that, if this be admitted, he must be entitled to meet impertinence by reticence. But it must be observed that the word "reticence" is somewhat inadequate alike to the necessities of the case and to the ambit of the argument, because if a man asks, "Are you the author of *Waverley*?" and you reply, "I decline to make any statement on the matter," the purpose of the questioner will be fully

SIR WALTER SCOTT

achieved. I cannot myself doubt that the teaching of Sir Walter Scott (and I infer also, his practice) was to preserve a secret which he conceived to be his own by any bluntness of affirmation or negation which he found necessary for his purpose.

The limits indeed of permissible mendacity, if there be such, have long been the subject of interesting ethical debate. One remembers the old assumption that in no circumstances was a positive falsehood permitted to a man of honour. But a test has been applied. Supposing you are standing at a point at which five different roads diverge. A terror-stricken wretch runs past and takes one of these roads. Seven minutes later six armed villains follow in hot pursuit and ask you which road he has taken. What is your answer to be? You may, of course, answer that you did not see him. That would not be true. You may refuse to answer at all, but I have already supposed that the villains were armed, and, therefore, on the whole, one would perhaps think it proper to answer. I believe—indeed I hope—that you would lie.

I do not pursue these topics further, full of interest as they are ; but I make the observation how singular it was that, over this long period of years, so few people really knew that Scott had written these romances. Almost exactly a hundred years ago, and in this ancient city, the authoritative announcement was first made that Scott was the author of the Waverley novels.

I cannot, in any time available to me, even attempt to measure the quality of his stories, still less to estimate their permanent place in literature. To me it seems certain that they must occupy one of the highest places, if only because their begetter was almost the pioneer of adventurous romance. No one had ever adjusted to the form of the novel, romantic

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

literature in the sense in which he conceived and expressed it. The world of letters had wept over the long-drawn-out and maudlin sentimentality of Richardson ; had reviewed the long-postponed seduction of Clarissa ; the robust humour, the high spirit, the humanity of Fielding ; the cynical, ironical, and coarse brilliancy of Sterne. And there were women writers, too, almost of the same period, whose charm and ingenuity still deservedly command the admiration of discriminating readers. It remains, nevertheless, broadly true that Scott was the pioneer of those romances which commingle, in subtle alchemy, the atmospheres of adventure and love ; and it remains equally true that, ever since he wrote his novels, the reading taste of the world has more and more inclined towards the imaginative and adventurous among story-tellers. Scott was the true father of Stevenson. What a father ! What a son !

Consider how vast was the canvas upon which he painted, how versatile and fecund the brush, how vivid the pigment. He wrote, indeed, upon the scale and with the range of the greatest masters of French literature. It is certain that the exuberant genius of Dumas owed much to the full-blooded yet literary pages of Scott ; and I never watch the Three Musketeers galloping from Boulogne without recalling that they paid a debt to the dreams of adventure so brilliantly flung into words by him who was Dumas's master. Did Dumas, I wonder, know how much Scott owed in rhythm (or thought he owed) to his gallops on Musselburgh sands ?

And now, I ask you only to consider the number of Scott's stories ; to consider the variety of his plots ; to consider, if you assembled in one room the immense number of characters created by him, possessing in almost every case a distinct and enduring individuality, how wise, how witty, how brave,

SIR WALTER SCOTT

how beautiful the company ! What would one give to meet them as an inconspicuous guest ?

Nor, as I have indicated, would it be right to dismiss him from the British point of view with the light and almost disparaging observation that, after all, he was particularly if not entirely a Scottish author, a Scottish hero. Sometimes it is put almost as if some barbarity or obsolescence of diction made it impossible that he should be generally appreciated or even generally understood in England. Wilder nonsense was never talked. We are not so simple as is sometimes supposed. I have little knowledge of the Scottish dialect—I had none until, for my sins, I was led to acquire some acquaintance with the Scottish feudal law—but I am bound to make it plain that I never felt difficulty in understanding any of Scott's allusiveness, or indeed any of his language.

I make a still further claim. I say that, if he had never written one Scottish romance, he would yet be entitled to live for ever in the pages of an English Anthology, prosaic or poetic. For he showed himself to be as capable of understanding the soul of St George, the underlying essence of pre-mediaeval England, as of harping melodiously and forcefully on the strings of your own storied clannish life. What is *Ivanhoe* but the very spirit of St. George and England ? Robin Hood is painted with a touch so masterly and as faithful to English tradition as *Rob Roy* is to your conception of the character of that bold Scottish adventurer.

Walter Scott was in fact almost as eloquent a witness to the genius and patriotism of England as to the genius and patriotism of Scotland. I recall here that so lavish, so prodigal, was he of stray lines of poetry that much of his best may have perished (for the authorship of it) for ever. He often treated his poetry like his money affairs. He has carelessly

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

prefaced many of the chapters of his romances by verses which another would have collected with care, and published with complacency. This brings me to one of the strangest paradoxes in literary history :—

“ Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife !
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.”

For sixty years it was not only supposed that this verse was written by Walter Scott, but it was conceived that it was the very embodiment, in its highest and most eloquent expression, of his gay and daring philosophy of life. And quite recently it became known that these lines, which he himself described as anonymous, had been published in a comparatively unknown periodical in the course of a poem which contained not another distinguished line, and which was not otherwise known to the literature either of Scotland or England. Some faithful Scot lately wrote to a literary paper in London that Sir Walter Scott, with his accustomed generosity, may have been asked to read over an anonymous poem by an unknown contemporary, and may have contributed the one jewel it contained. I should like to believe that this was true. A lawyer, alas ! cannot so believe.

And so, by way of ending, I add an alien, if affectionate, tribute to the majestic edifice of that fame which has spread over all the civilised world. As I look back on that long, unselfish, noble, toilsome, and patriotic life, I take pleasure in borrowing the words of a young English poet, written of a friend who lost his life in a water-sodden trench :—

“ Oh strong, Oh brave, Oh true ! Farewell.”

LORD BIRKENHEAD

CHARACTERISTICS OF WAGNER'S MUSIC

CHARACTERISTICS OF WAGNER'S MUSIC

THE two commonplaces of adverse musical criticism are the charges of unmelodiousness and of dissonance. We may here waive the question of their relevance—both are absorbed in the general significance of the scene—and consider them in succession as constituents of the dramatic texture. The characters are the focal points of interest, the verse and the musical style are the garments that we see them by. Now in these present “days of eager experiment” there have arisen signs of a belief that all successions of tone are melodic and that all melodies are of equal value. This, at any rate, was not the view of a century ago. There was no such democratisation of rights, certain notes were recognised, *a posteriori*, as having special affinity with one another, and it was through a prerogative choice that the rise and fall of their curve was determined. One of the marks of a great melody is that each of its constituent notes is inevitable—one cannot imagine the omission or alteration of any without irreparable loss, and though its magic is in the last resort above and beyond analysis it requires this ordered symmetry as its external counterpart. Melodies of a lower order are always in some measure inorganic—either their balance is too mechanical or the flow of their stanza is checked at some point by a false rhyme. And the deeper and richer the emotional content, the more surely does it exercise its privilege of selection. But as music has advanced the area of choice has widened with it. Relations of tone which lay outside the horizon of our predecessors have won their way to admission; the classics are supreme within their own citadel, but the lines of the *pomoerium* have widened and have brought fresh

territory under the city auspices. And it may well be that we of the older generation were too much inclined to scrutinise the claims of Wagner's music by reference to the system which we had inherited and with which we had become familiarised. The nomen Latinum was at first depreciated in comparison with the patrician civitas ; it came in on a popular wave and its reward was emancipation.

The name dissonance is so loosely employed that it has hardly any longer a distinctive significance. Where it is not a mere term of abuse it is generally taken to cover any simultaneous combination of notes on which the ear cannot rest with pleasure, or, more rationally, which cannot justify itself as a staple of the composition. In the former sense it is obviously more relative than any other artistic term ; the discord which lacerated the ears of one generation may in the next pass without notice or be welcomed as a novel and ingenious point of colour. The latter has a slightly more objective basis, for it relates the discord to the nature of its context not to our own sensibility, but even here the rule is not absolute, and if there be any court of appeal it belongs to the composer. Nothing is more lamentable than the way in which the world has at one time condemned as discordant effects that which at another it has placed at the height of artistic achievement ; it is not a matter of acceptance only but of the dramatic transfer of admiration. We have recently heard Stravinsky's *Oiseau de Feu* greeted as a type of pure romance ; we may look nearer home at the crowds which are acclaiming Wagner as a constitutional leader and wondering what all the coil was about.

The principles which determined his use of " dissonance " are perfectly intelligible and are applied with increasing insistence through his work. In the harmonic vocabulary are many expressions

CHARACTERISTICS OF WAGNER'S MUSIC

which so far suggest the general types of joy and sorrow, of pity and desire, of hesitancy and resolution, that they can reinforce the articulate words of the poem. These he appropriately employs, extracting from each its full emotional content and placing them in a scheme the outline and balance of which are drawn not by the exigencies of musical structure but by those of dramatic presentation. He does not even shrink from ugliness on occasion, witness the Conspiracy scene in *Gotterdammerung* which is intended to be harsh and poignant, but such moments are extremely rare and when they occur are justified and explained by their purpose. In a vast majority of instances the tonal language sublimates and ennobles the passion which it sets forth, it treats them *sub specie aeternitatis* and carries our apprehension with them to a higher and serener level. And it is sufficient testimony that the passages which on a first hearing we are most inclined to call in question fall by experience into their natural context and shock us no more, and not otherwise, than the treachery of Iago or the malice of Richard III.

Part of this sublimation is due to his extraordinary and unexampled command of the orchestra. Under his inspiration the actual sound of the band is different from that of his predecessors ; not that he is addicted to the use of strange or exotic instruments ; he is, as a rule, satisfied with the customary resources of the Romantic movement, though he produces some of his most astonishing effects by adding a third instrument to the usual duologue of the wood-wind and by assigning to the bass-tuba (the instrument which Spontini " did not wish to banish from the orchestra ") an unforgettable part in melodic expression. That he was in some degree influenced by Berlioz is undeniable, but here also the disciple was greater than his master, he had the same self-confidence, the same

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

intimate knowledge both of the capacity of the several instruments and of their sonority in combination ; he added an even more masterly power of restraint and of gradually accumulated climax. Illustrations may be found on every page of his works : we may exemplify by three tiny points which no one but he would have thought of devising—the silvery tone of the eight harps in *Rheingold*, the oboe which sharpens the edge of the Mastersingers' March, and the clarinet which doubles and enriches the strings in the opening phrase of *Parsifal*. We need not emphasise the association of special instruments with the characters and events of the drama. That was an essential part of the presentation, and we are to note only the lavish variety of the tone achieved and the sureness of touch with which it is invariably applied and which makes of each of the dramatis personae a living reality.

This overflowing sense of vitality it has been his to bestow and communicate. Critics have spoken of his "pessimism," meaning apparently that most of his dramas are tragic and that most tragedies involve death or disaster. But it is impossible to emerge from one of his mature dramas without a heightened recognition of the value of life. Whether in conquest or in renunciation the central figure is always heroic and we catch a reflected glory from that heroism and are ennobled both by its achievements and by its sufferings. The whole world grows larger and more real ; fuller of adventure and episode and high endeavour ; we lose sight of our petty sorrows and our trivial ambitions, and enter into the company and converse of the immortals. The final word of Wagner's music-drama is not failure but renunciation, and the obverse of renunciation is redemption.

SIR HENRY HADOW

THE PRÉSIDENT DE BROSSES

A CHARMING and sometimes forgotten feature of the world as it used to be before the age of trains and telephones was the provincial capital. When Edinburgh was as far from London as Vienna is to-day, it was natural—it was inevitable—that it should be the centre of a local civilisation, which, while it remained politically and linguistically British, developed a colour and a character of its own. In France there was the same pleasant phenomenon. Bordeaux, Toulouse, Aix-en-Provence—up to the end of the eighteenth century each of these was in truth a capital, where a peculiar culture had grown up that was at once French and idiosyncratic. An impossibility to-day! It is hard to believe, as one whisks through Dijon in a tram, that here, a hundred and fifty years ago, was the centre of a distinct and vigorous civilisation—until, perhaps, one leaves the tram, and turns aside into the rue de la Préfecture. Ah! One has come upon a vanished age. The houses, so solid and yet so vivacious, with their cobbled courts and coloured tiles, seem to be withdrawn into an aristocratic resignation. Memory and forgetfulness are everywhere. It is the moment to reflect upon the Président de Brosses.

Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, had become in the eighteenth century pre-eminently a city of magistrates. There the provincial *parlement* assembled and the laws were administered by the hereditary judges, the nobility of the long robe, whose rule was more immediate, more impressive, and almost more powerful, than the King's. Charles de Brosses was born into this aristocracy, and grew up to be a perfect representative of its highest traditions. He was extremely intelligent, admirably conscientious, and

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

crammed full of life. He was at once a wit, a scholar, a lawyer, and a man of the world. He resembled the generous wine of the country in his combination of gay vitality with richness and strength. His tiny figure and his satirical face lost in the forest of a judicial wig might prompt to laughter—"the corners of one's mouth," said Diderot, "couldn't help going up when one looked at him"; but he was impressive on the bench; and, late in life, was to prove his patriotism by his intrepid resistance when the privileges of his province were attacked by the royal authority. In his leisure, he devoted himself to every kind of literary and scientific work. A tour in Italy produced a series of amusing letters, which, published posthumously, are still read and remembered; his book on the newly discovered Herculaneum (1750) was the first on the subject; his *Histoire des navigations des Terres Australes* (1756) was of use to both Cook and Bougainville; his *Culte des Dieux Fétiches* (1760) contained a curious speculation on the origin of the religion of Egypt; his *Traité de la formation mécanique des langues* (1765) was the earliest attempt at a science of etymology; and his labours were concluded with an elaborate edition of *Sallust* (1777) upon which he had worked for thirty years. The growth of knowledge has converted his researches and his speculations into mere curiosities; but it was natural that the citizens of Dijon should have honoured him as one of their most splendid luminaries, and that the Président de Brosses should have been compared in his day to that other great provincial figure of a previous generation—the Président de Montesquieu. Of course, though Dijon was select and Dijon was magnificent, it had to be admitted that there did exist a higher tribunal, at whose bar taste, learning, and behaviour received their final doom or their crowning approbation: the drawing-rooms of Paris reigned

THE PRÉSIDENT DE BROSSES

supreme. In those drawing-rooms the Président was well thought of ; he had powerful friends at Court ; was it not to be expected that at last, in the fullness of time, his worth would be completely recognised and receive its due reward in the highest honour that could fall to a man of his pretensions—a seat in the Academy ? A prize, indeed, that it was impossible not to hope for ! The promises of other worlds had grown dim and dubious ; but here, among the glorious forty, was a definite, an indisputable immortality—and one, moreover, that possessed the singular advantage of being enjoyable here and now, while the eighteenth-century sun still shone on the rue de la Préfecture.

The Président was at the height of his exuberant manhood—he was not yet fifty—when something occurred which had a strange and unexpected effect upon his history. Voltaire, having quarrelled with Frederick the Great and shaken the dust of Potsdam from his feet, had been wandering for some years in uncertainty among the minor states that lay between France and Germany. He had settled for a time at Colmar ; he had moved to Lausanne ; then he had gone to Geneva and taken a country house in its neighbourhood. But the Calvinism of the townspeople, who frowned at his passion for private theatricals, annoyed him ; and his eye fell on the house and territory of Ferney, which was just inside the borders of France, but, lying on the eastern slopes of the Jura mountains, was so remote as to be almost independent of French control and within a drive of the free city of Geneva. This was exactly what he wanted—a secluded abode, where he would have elbow-room for his activities, and from which he could bolt at any moment, if things became too hot for him. Accordingly, in 1758, he bought Ferney, where he lived for the rest of his life ; and at the same

time he entered into negotiations for the purchase of a neighbouring property—that of Tournay—which belonged to the *Président de Brosses*. The *Président*, who already had a slight acquaintance with the great man—his wife, a *Crèveœur*, was the daughter of one of Voltaire's oldest friends—declared that he would be delighted to oblige him. There was some stiff haggling, for each party prided himself on his business capacity, but eventually Voltaire, for 35,000 francs, became possessed of the domain of Tournay—which included the right to the title of Count—on a life-tenancy. The bargain, obviously, was something of a gamble; the new *Comte de Tournay* was sixty-four, and, so he declared, on the point of death; but then he had been on the point of death ever since any one could remember. When it was all over, the *Président* had an uneasy feeling that he had been done. The feeling increased as time went on, and his agent informed him that the estate was being allowed to go to rack and ruin. He complained; but the poet replied with a flat denial, declared—what was quite true—that he had built a theatre at Tournay, and begged the *Président* to come and see his latest tragedy performed in it. A little later, a new manœuvre began: Voltaire proposed that he should buy the property outright. The *Président* was not altogether averse; but this time he was far more cautious; as the negotiations proceeded, he became privately convinced that an attempt was being made to cheat him; but he said nothing, and the proposal lapsed. Voltaire, on his side, was none too pleased with his bargain. The land of Tournay was poor, and the Countship had brought with it various responsibilities and expenses not at all to his taste. He was vexed; and his vexation took the form of bothering the *Président*, in letter after letter, with a multitude of legal questions upon points con-

THE PRÉSIDENT DE BROSES

nected with the property. The Président was also vexed ; but he answered every letter and every question with extreme civility.

In this way two years passed—two years during which the Président published his *Culte des Dieux Fétiches* and Voltaire his *Candide*. The old creature at Ferney was at last beginning to settle down to the final and by far the most important period of his immense and extraordinary career. Free, rich, happy, with his colossal reputation and his terrific energy, he was starting on the great adventure of his life—his onslaught upon Christianity. Meanwhile his vitality and his pugnacity were satisfying themselves in a multitude of minor ways. He was belabouring Rousseau, torturing Fréron, annihilating le Franc de Pompignan ; he was corresponding with all the world, he was composing half a dozen tragedies, he was writing the life of Peter the Great, he was preparing a monumental edition of Corneille. When, in the midst of these and a hundred other activities, he received a bill for 281 francs from a peasant called Charlot Baudy for fourteen loads of wood from Tournay, he brushed the matter on one side. More bother from Tournay ! But it was ridiculous—why should he pay for wood from his own estate ? And besides, he remembered quite well that the Président, before the sale was completed, had told him that he could have as much wood as he wanted. He did nothing, and when Charlot Baudy pressed for the money, refused to pay. Then, early in 1761, a letter arrived from the Président “ Agréez, Monsieur,” he began, “ que je vous demande l’explication d’une chose tout-à-fait singulière.” Charlot Baudy, he continued, had, before the sale of Tournay, bought from the Président the cut wood on the estate ; Baudy had now sent in his account of what he owed the Président, and had subtracted from it the sum of 281 francs for wood supplied

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

to M. de Voltaire ; his reason for this was that M. de Voltaire had told him that the wood was a gift from the Président "Je vous demande excuse," the letter went on, "si je vous répète un tel propos : car vous sentez bien que je suis fort éloigné de croire que vous l'ayez tenu, et je n'y ajoute pas la moindre foi. Je ne prends ceci que pour le discours d'un homme rustique fait pour ignorer les usages du monde et les convenances ; qui ne sait pas qu'on envoie bien à son ami et son voisin un panier de pêches, mais que si on s'avisait de lui faire la galanterie de quatorze moules de bois, il le prendrait pour une absurdité contraire aux bienséances." The sarcasm was clear and cutting, and the Président proceeded to give his own account of what had occurred. He distinctly remembered, he said, that Voltaire, at the time of the negotiations about Tournay, had, in the course of conversation, complained of a lack of firewood, and that he had thereupon recommended Baudy as the man who would supply Voltaire with as much as he wanted. That was all ; the offensive notion of a present had never entered his head. "J'espère," he concluded, "que vous voudrez bien faire incontinent payer cette bagatelle à Charlot, parce que, comme je me ferai certainement payer de lui, il aurait infailliblement aussi son recours contre vous ; ce qui ferait une affaire du genre de celles qu'un homme tel que vous ne veut point avoir."

It was obvious to anyone in his senses that the Président was right : that his account of the matter was the true one, and that, as he had said, the only reasonable thing for Voltaire to do was to pay Baudy the money—the miserable sum of money !—and finish the business. But Voltaire was not in his senses—he never was when even the most miserable sum of money was concerned. He could not bear to think of parting with 281 francs. It was monstrous ;

THE PRÉSIDENT DE BROSSES

the land and everything on it was his ; the wood had been given him ; he would not be set down ; and this wretched man had dared to be ironical ! At any rate, he had had the wood and burnt it, and the Président de Brosses might do what he liked. Accordingly, in his next letter, he airily dismissed the subject. " It is no longer a question," he said, " of Charles Baudy and four loads of wood "—and proceeded to discuss an entirely different matter. The Président replied in detail, and then reverted for a moment to Baudy—" Four loads—read *fourteen* ; you dropped a figure ; we call this a *lapsus lingue* " ;—and he begged Voltaire once more to avoid the painful publicity of a lawsuit. Voltaire made no reply ; he hoped the whole thing was over ; but he was wrong. In June, the Président sued Baudy for 281 francs, and in July Baudy sued Voltaire for the same sum. The cases came on at the local court, and were adjourned.

And now the fury of the frantic old desperado flamed up sky-high. Seizing his pen, he poured out, in letter after letter to all the lawyers in Dijon, his account of what had happened—the swindling to which he had been subjected—the insults to which he had been exposed. To a particular friend, the Président de Ruffey, he sent a long formal statement of his case, followed by a private sheet of enraged argumentation. As for his enemy, he was no longer a président—the little bewigged monster—he was a fetish. He would see to it that the nickname stuck. " Le Fétiche," he shrieked, " demande de l'argent de ses moules et de ses fagots. . . . Le misérable m'accable d'exploits." He had put up Baudy, who was a man of straw, to do his dirty work. " Songez qu'il faisait cette infamie dans le temps qu'il recevait de moi 47 mille livres ! . . . Qu'il tremble ! Il ne s'agit pas de le rendre ridicule : il s'agit de le dés-

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

honorer. Cela m'afflige. Mais il payera cher la bassesse d'un procédé si coupable et si lâche." Finally he addressed the Fetish himself in a letter composed in his most magnificent style. "Vous n'êtes donc venu chez moi, Monsieur, vous ne m'avez offert votre amitié, que pour empoisonner par des procès la fin de ma vie." In great detail he went over the whole dispute. With singular violence, and no less singular obtuseness, he asserted the hopelessly contradictory propositions, both that the wood was his own and that the Président had given it him ; he hinted that his enemy would make use of his position to pervert the course of justice ; and he ended with threats. "S'il faut que M. le Chancelier, et les Ministres, et tout Paris, soient instruits de votre procédé, ils le seront ; et, s'il se trouve dans votre Compagnie respectable une personne qui vous approuve, je me condamne "

The Président's moment had come—the testing moment of his life. What was he to do ? It was still not too late to withdraw, to pay the money with a shrug of the shoulders and put an end to this fearful hubbub and this terrifying enmity. For a short space, he wavered. It was true that Voltaire was the greatest writer of the age, and perhaps he deserved some allowances on that score. In any case, he was an extremely dangerous antagonist—a man who had made mincemeat of all his literary opponents and fought on equal terms with Frederick the Great. But no ! It was intolerable ! His Burgundian blood boiled, and the proud traditions of aristocracy and the judicial habits of a lifetime asserted themselves. " Là-dessus on dit " :—so he explained later to a friend—" c'est un homme dangereux. Et à cause de cela, faut-il donc le laisser être méchant impunément ? Ce sont au contraire ces sortes de gens-là qu'il faut châtier. Je ne le crains pas. . . . On l'admire, parce

THE PRÉSIDENT DE BROSSES

qu'il fait d'excellents vers. Sans doute il les fait excellents. Mais ce sont ses vers qu'il faut admirer." And so, taking Voltaire's letter, he wrote upon the margin of it a reply, in which he not only rebutted his arguments but told him exactly what he thought of him. Point by point he exposed the futility of Voltaire's contentions. He showed that there was actually a clause in the lease, by which the cut wood on the estate was specifically excepted from the sale. He offered to drop the matter if Voltaire would send him a receipt in the following terms : " Je soussigné, François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire, chevalier, seigneur de Ferney, gentilhomme ordinaire de la chambre du Roi, reconnois que M. de Brosses, président du Parlement, m'a fait présent de . . . voies de bois de moule, pour mon chauffage, en valeur de 281 f., dont je le remercie." He pointed out that otherwise he had nothing to do with the business, that Voltaire owed the money to Charlot Baudy, and that it was indeed extraordinary to see " un homme si riche et si illustre se tourmenter à tel excès pour ne pas payer à un paysan 280 livres pour du bois de chauffage qu'il a fourni." His incidental remarks were nothing if not outspoken. " En vérité," he wrote, " je gémis pour l'humanité de voir un si grand génie avec un cœur si petit sans cesse tiraillé par des misères de jalousie et de lésine. C'est vous-même qui empoisonnez une vie si bien faite d'ailleurs pour être heureuse." As for the suggestion that he would bring undue influence to bear upon the case,—“ il ne convient pas de parler ainsi : soyez assez sage à l'avenir pour ne rien dire de pareil à un magistrat.” “ Tenez vous pour dit,” the letter concluded, “ de ne m'écrire plus ni sur cette matière ni surtout de ce ton. Je vous fais, Monsieur, le souhait de Perse : *Mens sana in corpore sano.*”

It is difficult indeed to imagine the scene at Ferney

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

while Voltaire was deciphering, on the edges of his own letter, this devastating reply. But there was worse to follow. A note came from the *Président de Ruffey*, in which, with infinite politeness, he made it clear that in his opinion Voltaire had no case, and that he had better pay. At the same time Ruffey wrote to Madame Denis, Voltaire's niece, advising her to give the money privately to Baudy. Madame Denis had not the courage to do so ; she showed the letter to her uncle, who, in a dictated reply, still tried to keep up an appearance of self-confidence. "*Je ne crains point les Fétiches*," he added in his own hand. "*Et les Fétiches doivent me craindre*." And again, at the bottom of the paper, he scribbled, "*N.B. Il n'y a qu'une voix sur le Fétiche*." But such screams were useless ; the game was up. The *Président's* letter remained unanswered ; Voltaire swallowed in silence the incredible affront ; and when, a little later, the *Président*, feeling that he could afford to be magnanimous, informed a common friend that he would cancel his account with Baudy if Voltaire gave 281 francs to the poor of Tournay, the great man was glad enough to fall in with the suggestion.

The *Président* had triumphed ; but could he really have supposed that he would escape from such an antagonist unscathed ? The sequel came ten years later, when the *Président Hénault* died and left a seat vacant at the Academy. There was a strong movement in favour of electing the *Président de Brosses*. There appeared to be no other very suitable candidate ; his friends rallied round him ; and D'Alembert, writing to Voltaire from Paris, assured him that there was every likelihood that "*ce plat Président*" would be chosen for the vacant place. The serious feature of the case was that the old *Maréchal de Richelieu*, who, after a lifetime of

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

fighting and gallantry, amused his decrepitude by making his influence felt in affairs of this kind, supported him. What was to be done? Voltaire was equal to the occasion: his letters flew. At all costs the Fetish must be kept out. He wrote repeatedly to Richelieu, in that tone of delicate cajolery of which he was a master, touching upon their ancient friendship, and spinning a strange tale of the perfidies committed by "ce petit persécuteur nasillonneur," until the Maréchal melted, and promised to withdraw his support. Finally Voltaire despatched to D'Alembert a signed declaration to the effect that he would himself resign from the Academy if Bosses was elected. This settled the matter, and no more was heard of the candidature of the Président. It seems likely that he never knew what it was that had baulked him of the ambition of his life. For 281 francs he had lost the immortality of the Academy. A bad bargain, no doubt; and yet, after all, the transaction had gained him another, and in fact a unique, distinction: he would go down to history as the man who had got the better of Voltaire.

LYTTON STRACHEY

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

THE impression of the personality of Lawrence remains living and vivid upon the minds of his friends, and the sense of his loss is in no way dimmed among his countrymen. All feel the poorer that he has gone from us. In these days dangers and difficulties gather upon Britain and her Empire, and we are also conscious of a lack of outstanding figures with which to overcome them. Here was a man in whom there existed not only an immense capacity

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

for service, but that touch of genius which everyone recognises and no one can define. Alike in his great period of adventure and command or in these later years of self-suppression and self-imposed eclipse, he always reigned over those with whom he came in contact. They felt themselves in the presence of an extraordinary being. They felt that his latent reserves of force and will-power were beyond measurement. If he roused himself to action, who should say what crisis he could not surmount or quell? If things were going very badly, how glad one would be to see him come round the corner.

Part of the secret of this stimulating ascendancy lay of course in his disdain for most of the prizes, the pleasures, and comforts of life. The world naturally looks with some awe upon a man who appears unconcernedly indifferent to home, money, comfort, rank, or even power and fame. The world feels, not without a certain apprehension, that here is someone outside its jurisdiction; someone before whom its allurements may be spread in vain; someone strangely enfranchised, untamed, untrammelled by convention, moving independently of the ordinary currents of human action; a being readily capable of violent revolt or supreme sacrifice, a man, solitary, austere, to whom existence is no more than a duty, yet a duty to be faithfully discharged. He was indeed a dweller upon the mountain tops where the air is cold, crisp, and rarefied, and where the view on clear days commands all the Kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.

Lawrence was one of those beings whose pace of life was faster and more intense than the ordinary. Just as an aeroplane only flies by its speed and pressure against the air, so he flew best and easiest in the hurricane. He was not in complete harmony with the normal. The fury of the Great War

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

raised the pitch of life to the Lawrence standard. The multitudes were swept forward till their pace was the same as his. In this heroic period he found himself in perfect relation both to men and events.

I have often wondered what would have happened to Lawrence if the Great War had continued for several more years. His fame was spreading fast and with the momentum of the fabulous throughout Asia. The earth trembled with the wrath of the warring nations. All the metals were molten. Everything was in motion. No one could say what was impossible. Lawrence might have realised Napoleon's young dream of conquering the East ; he might have arrived at Constantinople in 1919 or 1920 with many of the tribes and races of Asia Minor and Arabia at his back. But the storm wind ceased as suddenly as it had arisen. The skies became clear ; the bells of Armistice rang out. Mankind returned with indescribable relief to its long-interrupted, fondly-cherished ordinary life, and Lawrence was left once more moving alone on a different plane and at a different speed.

When his literary masterpiece was written, lost, and written again ; when every illustration had been profoundly considered and every incident of typography and paragraphing settled with meticulous care ; when Lawrence on his bicycle had carried the precious volumes to the few—the very few he deemed worthy to read them—happily he found another task to his hands which cheered and comforted his soul. He saw as clearly as anyone the vision of Air power and all that it would mean in traffic and war. He found in the life of an aircraftsman that balm of peace and equipoise which no great station or command could have bestowed upon him. He felt that in living the life of a private

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

in the Royal Air Force he would dignify that honourable calling and help to attract all that is keenest in our youthful manhood to the sphere where it is most urgently needed. For this service and example, to which he devoted the last twelve years of his life, we owe him a separate debt. It was in itself a princely gift.

Lawrence had a full measure of the versatility of genius. He held one of those master keys which unlock the doors of many kinds of treasure-houses. He was a savant as well as a soldier. He was an archaeologist as well as a man of action. He was an accomplished scholar as well as an Arab partisan. He was a mechanic as well as a philosopher. His background of sombre experience and reflection only seemed to set forth more brightly the charm and gaiety of his companionship, and the generous majesty of his nature. Those who knew him best miss him most; but our country misses him most of all; and misses him most of all now. For this is a time when the great problems upon which his thought and work had so long centred, problems of aerial defence, problems of our relations with the Arab peoples, fill an ever larger space in our affairs. For all his reiterated renunciations I always felt that he was a man who held himself ready for a new call. While Lawrence lived one always felt—I certainly felt it strongly—that some overpowering need would draw him from the modest path he chose to tread and set him once again in full action at the centre of memorable events.

It was not to be. The summons which reached him, and for which he was equally prepared, was of a different order. It came as he would have wished it, swift and sudden on the wings of Speed. He had reached the last leap in his gallant course through life.

EINSTEIN

“ All is over ! Fleet career,
Dash of greyhound slipping thongs,
Flight of falcon, bound of deer,
Mad hoof-thunder in our rear,
Cold air rushing up our lungs,
Din of many tongues.”

King George the Fifth wrote to Lawrence's brother,
“ His name will live in history ” That is true. It
will live in English letters ; it will live in the tradi-
tions of the Royal Air Force ; it will live in the
annals of war and in the legends of Arabia.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

EINSTEIN

HARDLY had the excitement of the War died down,
than it began to be realised that another scientific
revolution had taken place, as momentous as that
associated with the name of Darwin. But this time
it was a revolution of which nobody, except a very
few expert mathematicians, could make head or tail.
All that the ordinary man could grasp about it was
that a certain Swiss-German Jew, called Einstein,
had upset all common-sense ideas of space and time,
and that he had actually detected errors in those
laws of Newton that had been accepted as unquestion-
ingly, for the two past centuries, as those of the
multiplication table. If Einstein had confined his
support of these innovations to mathematical demon-
stration, however cogent, he might not have attracted
so much attention. But he did more. He looked
out upon a Universe performing its eternal routine,
as everybody imagined, in strict conformity with
Sir Isaac's principles. “ But,” said Einstein, “ if

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

at such and such a time you will please to observe it closely, you will perceive that it is guilty of minute but definite irregularities—doing things it could not possibly have done if Newton had been right ”

And just as St. Patrick had pitted his Christian magic against that of King Loigaire's druids, so did Einstein appeal to signs in the heavens to justify his revolt from the Newtonian orthodoxy. And lo, the signs appeared, exactly as Einstein had predicted Expeditions left England in 1919 for West Africa and Brazil to observe a total eclipse of the sun. And sure enough, certain stars turned out to be slightly out of their Newtonian places, just as Einstein had predicted, though for reasons concerned with the bending of light, quite unthinkable to the common-sense mind

The intelligent layman, though he was utterly unable to follow Einstein's reasoning, was nevertheless profoundly impressed by the fact that he, in the characteristic phrase of the Twentieth Century, had delivered the goods, or, as an earlier age might have put it, had been justified by God. But what did it all mean? There were endless attempts to dish up the Einstein theory for popular consumption—to show how very reasonable it was if you only chose to look at it in the right way. But the more they succeeded in conveying of it the more grotesquely incredible did it seem. A mad universe, my masters—and madder than even Bedlam could have imagined! As different as possible from the right little, tight little, cosmos of the Rationalists.

Ever since the dawn of the Renaissance, the importance of Man in his Universe had been steadily declining. It was no longer a stage set for the drama of his salvation or damnation. He had become the merest accident, a transient crawler

EINSTEIN

on one of the smaller satellites of a not specially important star. But if the Universe had ceased to concern itself with his nothingness, it had at least paid him the compliment of conforming to his notions of sanity. After Einstein it had ceased to do even this. It became as inconceivable as the square root of a minus quantity. Even space and time ceased to mean anything intelligible. They had become merged in a space-time continuum, whose curvature was gravity.

It was all very well for Mr. Bertrand Russell, a philosopher of the Liberal-Rationalist tradition, to end up his account of why he was not a Christian with an exhortation "to stand up and look the world frankly in the face." You might just as well talk of looking the Greek Calends in the face. There was no face, nothing on which even the mind's eye could rest for a moment, only a form of words hung on a chain of mathematical inference.

To bring home the nature of the new Universe, as revealed by Einstein, the only way was that of the Eternal in Job ; to stun the minds of your audience with a bombardment of violent paradoxes. You might not be able to add a cubit to your stature, but you could add something to it by lying flat in a boat facing North-South, and then allowing it to swing round on the current to East-West. You could double the mass of anything if you could only succeed in moving it fast enough. Time might be different to a being in rapid motion from what it would be to one who stood still. Time was, in fact, as Bergson had already discovered from his very different angle of approach, nothing fixed and absolute, but *your* time, or *my* time. It was impossible to say where time ended or space began. It was impossible to retain any common-sense notion of either of them. They had both, separately or together, become like

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

the prophet Habakkuk, "*capables de tout.*"

Nobody was at all surprised, though not everybody was convinced, when it was suggested that the same nebula might be seen in two parts of the sky simultaneously, owing to the fact of its light not only having come direct, but also having gone on in a straight line all round the Universe and come back to earth from the other side. Scarcely an eyebrow was raised when Mr. Dunne, the inventor of an aeroplane, questioned whether time was tied to progress in one direction or whether past, present, and future might not be like a very much prolonged cinema reel that could at a pinch be turned backwards as well as forwards. Moreover, he claimed to have established, that in dreams the film may work either way indifferently, and may be constructed out of our memories of the future as easily as out of those of the past.

These discoveries about the relativity of space and time reinforced those about the immateriality at the basis of matter. And there was much else besides this to reinforce the conclusion that the more advanced science got, the more incredible was the universe that it revealed. Light and energy, instead of flowing in a steady stream, turned out to be produced in a series of jerks or packets like the pop-pop-popping of a motor-bike. If you dived down into the infinitely small you found electrons, like planets, jumping gaily out of one orbit and turning up simultaneously in another without ever passing between. If you soared up to the infinitely large, you might find the whole universe running away from itself at an inconceivable speed, and behaving like a bursting soap bubble. You might take it from the scientists that these things were true, but even so it was not a truth of which the ordinary human consciousness could make sense or

EINSTEIN

vision. The most that could be said about it had been said already by the Psalmist,

"Such knowledge is too wonderful and too excellent for me. I cannot attain to it."

ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD

NOTES

Birth of a Cloud. From "Sagittarius Rising," by Cecil Lewis.

Cecil Lewis joined the Army during the War at the age of sixteen to serve in the R.A.F. He was awarded the Military Cross. After the War he spent two years in China instructing the Chinese how to fly.

Sagittarius : "Ninth sign of the Zodiac, the archer, governing voyages and weapons and all swift things. A fiery but divided sign, dominated by Jupiter, denoting in the character gaiety and a love of sport on the one hand, and on the other a power of prophecy and philosophy : which sign occurs in the horoscope of the autobiographer, rising."

The scene of this extract is the front line in France during the autumn of 1916.

P. 5, l. 21. *Savannahs* : tracts of level land.

P. 6, l. 23 *Parasol* . a type of aeroplane.

Men and the Mountain. From "The Times."

P. 8, l. 13. *Schist* : crystalline rock which splits easily in a horizontal direction.

P. 9, l. 8 *Olympus* · the sacred mountain of the gods of ancient Greece.

P. 10, l. 18. *Laissez-passer* · a passport.

l. 25. *Triangulated* : triangulation is a method of surveying, for making maps of mountain country.

l. 33. *Arête* : a French word, meaning literally a fish-bone, used to denote a sharp ridge in mountaineering.

l. 35. *Col* : French "neck," a ridge leading upwards towards the summit.

P. 11, l. 6. *Trojans* : the ancient inhabitants of the city of Troy, famous for their tenacity in the long siege of their city by the Greeks.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

- P. 12, l. 5. *Coolies* : native porters.
 l. 27 *Gurkha* : British regiments recruited from Indian hill-tribes.
- P. 13, l. 8. *Séracs* : ice-pinnacles.
- P. 14, l. 1. *Moraine* : an expanse of loose stones and earth brought down by a glacier.
- P. 15, l. 12 *Spindrift* : spray.
 l. 29. *Scree* : rocky débris.
 l. 31. *Tantalus* : a king in ancient Greek mythology, who, having angered the gods, was punished after death by being condemned to be for ever tormented by thirst in a lake hung over with branches of fruit just out of his reach which receded as he tried to drink.
- l. 36 *Quails truffled in pâté de foie gras* : quails (a very small game-bird) stuffed with truffles (an underground fungus) in a paste made of fat goose-liver. All these things are very expensive delicacies.
- P. 16, l. 30 *Untamped gunpowder* : gunpowder used in blasting, which has not been pressed down with earth or sand to control the direction in which it explodes
- P. 17, l. 30. *Via Dolorosa* : "sorrowful way"—the name given by Christians to the street in Jerusalem over which our Lord passed on His way to crucifixion.
- ll. 34-35. *The Napoleonic retreat from Moscow* : Napoleon attacked Russia in 1812, and reached Moscow, which was then the capital, with his armies. He was defeated by the Russians, and, being overtaken by winter, was compelled to retreat right across Russia in bitter weather, which caused very heavy losses to the army.
- P. 19, l. 4. *Striated* : cut in parallel grooves.
 l. 16. *Coulour* : a gully.
- P. 21, l. 27. *Sangar* : a small hollow surrounded with heaped-up stones.
- P. 23, l. 2. *Ice-axe* : a tool carried by climbers, shaped like a pick-axe, for cutting steps in the ice and for getting a grip as the climber hauls himself up steep places.
- P. 24, ll. 26-27. "*Paid down more penitence than done trespass*": Shakespeare, "The Winter's Tale," Act V, Sc. 1. Spoken by Cleomenes to King Leontes.
- P. 25, l. 10. *Mortcloth* : pall.

The Country. From "Rotunda," by Aldous Huxley.

Aldous Huxley, grandson of Thomas Huxley, the biologist, and brother of Julian Huxley, Secretary of the London

NOTES

Zoological Gardens, worked between 1919 and 1921 on the editorial staff of the "Athenaeum" and as dramatic critic of the "Westminster." His works include "Crome Yellow," "Antic Hay," "Point Counter Point," and "Brave New World."

- P 26, l. 27. *Uncle Toby* : a character in Sterne's "Tristram Shandy."
- P. 27, l. 4. *Donne* : John Donne (1572-1631), the poet, was Dean of St. Paul's in the reign of Charles I.
- P. 28, l. 1. *Hindhead* : a hilly district in Surrey, near Guildford.
- l. 2 *The Elephant and Castle* : one of the less pleasant districts of London on the South side of the river, originally called after a famous inn, the name being a corruption of "Infanta of Castile," the title of a Spanish Princess
- ll 18-19. *Victor Emanuel* : the name of several Italian kings.
- P. 31, l. 3. *Evelyn* : John Evelyn (1620-1706), the famous diarist.
- l. 4. *The rocks at Clifton* : Clifton, on the outskirts of Bristol, has a famous gorge, regarded as a very fine sight, and spanned by a remarkable suspension-bridge.
- l. 35. *Fiat* : the trade name of the "Fabbrica Italiana Automobile, Torino," a well-known firm of motor manufacturers in Turin.
- P 32, l. 2. *Città Giardino* : Italian : garden-city.
- A *Motor Drive in the U.S.A.* From "A Visit to America," by A. G. Macdonell.
- A. G. Macdonell made a considerable hit in 1933 with "England, Their England," a light-hearted and perspicacious satire on typical aspects of English national life. He has followed up this success with "How Like an Angel," "Lords and Masters," and "The Autobiography of a Cad"
- P. 32, l. 13. *The Apocalyptic Horsemen* : the four horsemen seen by St. John as described in the Book of Revelation, chap. vi.
- l. 16. *Los Angeles* : a city in California largely devoted to the film industry.
- l. 18. *San Francisco* : the most important Pacific port of the United States, situated on the coast of California rather more than four hundred miles north of Los Angeles.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

- P. 33, l. 12. *San José* : a residential town and the centre of a fruit-canning industry, about fifty miles south-east of San Francisco.
- P. 34, l. 4. *Tannhauser* : Wagner's opera.
1. 5. *Carmen* : a French opera by Bizet.
 - ll. 8-9. *San Luis Obispo* : an oil port 190 miles north-west of Los Angeles.
 1. 10. *The Salinas River* : a river running through a very fertile valley, where a considerable industry of fruit and vegetables is carried on.
 1. 17. *Cantilever* : a cantilever bridge is one built in the style of the famous Forth Bridge.
 - ll. 20-21. *The Peruvian rope-bridge of the style of San Luis Rey* : "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" is a well-known American novel by Thornton Wilder. The scene is laid in sixteenth-century Peru, and the story describes the lives of five persons, all of whom are killed by the breaking of a primitive bridge slung on rope over a ravine.
 1. 32. *Adobe* : an unburnt brick, dried in the sun.
 1. 33. *El Camino del Rey* : Spanish : the Road of the King
 - ll. 35-36. *Franciscan* : a monk of the Order of St. Francis.
- P. 35, ll. 6-7. *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* : Our Lady of Guadalupe.
1. 10. *Velázquez* : (1599-1660), the greatest of the Spanish painters.
 - ll. 25-26 *St. Christopher* : the protecting saint against flood, earthquake, and fire.
- P. 36, ll. 32-33 *Coca Cola* : a cooling, non-intoxicant drink much advertised in America
- P. 37, l. 12. *G. K. Chesterton* : (1874-1936), English essayist
- P. 38, l. 15. *Aphrodite* : the Greek goddess of beauty.
- Juno* : chief of the Roman goddesses, the wife of Jupiter.
1. 16. *The Rape of the Sabine women* : after Romulus had founded his new city of Rome he found that, as his band of companions were all men, they must find wives in order to settle down and become a nation. They therefore raided the country of the Sabines, and carried off a number of Sabine women to be their wives.
 1. 17. *Cleopatra* : the famous Queen of Egypt at the time of the Roman Empire.

NOTES

- P. 39, l. 4. *Hitch-hikers* : people who tramp, but ask for lifts from passing cars whenever possible.
1. 30. *Santa Bárbara* : a city on the Californian coast, ninety miles north of Los Angeles.
1. 37. *Belvoir and Quorn* : two famous English hunts.
- P. 40, l. 10. *Dioscorus* : Saint Barbara was martyred for her faith. Her father, Dioscorus, himself beheaded her, and was immediately afterwards struck by lightning.
1. 19. *Battle of the Marne* : Sept 1914. One of the early battles of the Great War, and a victory for the Allied forces.
- P. 41, l. 3. *Czolgosz shot President McKinley* : William McKinley (born 1843) was President of the United States from 1896 till 1901, when he was shot by an anarchist.
- P. 42, l. 6. *Iowans and Nebraskans* : Iowa and Nebraska are two of the States of the Middle West

Moscow. From "First Russia, Then Tibet," by Robert Byron.

Robert Byron, traveller and author, has contributed articles to "Country Life," "The Daily Express," "The Week-End Review," "Harper's Bazaar" and "The Architectural Review," which articles collected are the substance of "First Russia, Then Tibet." "I have travelled," its author writes, "as a member of a community, and heir to a culture, whose joint worth is now in dispute, and I would discover what ideas, if those of the West be inadequate, can with greater advantage be found to guide the world."

- P. 44, l. 16. *Heath Robinson* : William Heath Robinson, born 1872, the well-known humorous artist.
1. 26. *Eton wall-game* : a form of football peculiar to Eton College.
1. 30. *Fane Douglas* : the reference would appear to be to Catherine Douglas, a brave Scottish lady ; the story tells that in 1436, while King James I of Scotland and his Queen were spending Christmas at Perth, they were treacherously attacked by Sir Robert Graham and his men, who intended to murder the King. The windows of the room had been barred and the bolts of the door removed, and Lady Catherine held the enemy at bay, while the King escaped to the cellars through a hole hacked in the floor-boards, by thrusting

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

her arm through the iron loops which were intended to hold the great bolts of the door.

- P. 45, l. 16. *Piscine* : fish-pond, sometimes also used as a name for a swimming-bath.
1. 31. *Lenin* : Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin (1870-1924), leader of the Russian Revolution.
 1. 33. *Kremlin* : the old citadel and palace of Moscow, now used as Government offices.
 1. 36. *Balalaika* : a stringed instrument of the guitar species
- P. 46, l. 7. *Marx* : (1818-1883), Karl Marx, the founder of international socialism.
11. 9-10. *Mrs. Sarojini Naidu* : daughter of Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyay ; an Indian lady who has taken a great part in national movements
 1. 12. *Albert Coates* : an Englishman whose parents lived in Russia, and who was born in Petrograd in 1882. He became the principal conductor of the Imperial Opera of Petrograd. He came to England after the Revolution and worked chiefly there and in America, conducting all the chief orchestras.
 1. 34. *Sir Henri Deterding* : a Dutchman, director of oil companies, who was given an English knighthood in 1920.
 1. 36. *The General Strike* : the strike of transport workers, miners, printers, and certain other classes of labour, which took place in England in 1926. It was signalled by the good-humoured way in which men of all walks of life undertook unaccustomed work in order to keep the essential services working.
- P. 47, ll. 3-4. *The Metropolitan Photos* : Russian ecclesiastics
1. 5. *Sophia Palaeologina* : or Zoe, daughter of Thomas Palaeologus, a member of the great Byzantine family who were for centuries Emperors of Constantinople. Zoe's branch of the family were princes of Achaia, in Italy.
 1. 6. *Tsar Ivan III* : a powerful emperor of Russia who reigned for over forty years in the fifteenth century.
 1. 7. *Broussa* : or Brusa, a town in Turkey.
 1. 15. *Boris Godunov* : Czar of Russia from 1598 to 1605. He was a great warrior and also devoted to his family; the scene on the stage to which the author refers is a scene from the Russian opera "Boris Godounov," by Moussorgsky.

NOTES

1. 29. *Catherine* : Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia (1729-1796).
- P. 48, l. 6. *Andreyev* . of Andrew.
- At a Spanish Parador*. From "Marching Spain," by V. S. Pritchett
- Victor Sawdon Pritchett, educated at Alleyn's School, author and critic, has also published "Clare Drummer," "Shirley Sanz," and "The Listening Years." The author went on foot across Spain from Badajoz to Leon, before the Spanish Revolution and Civil War began.
- P. 52, ll. 6-7. *Pan y toros y mañana sera otra dia* : Bread and bullfights and tomorrow will be another day.
1. 34. *Chorizo* . tripe.
- P. 54, l. 26. *Hombre!* : lit. "man" : as an interjection = "Hang it!"
- On the Mystical Nature of the Passport*. By A. P. Herbert.
- A. P. Herbert, Member of Parliament representing Oxford University, has been well known as A. P. H. of "Punch" since 1924. He was an Exhibitioner of Winchester and New College, Oxford, and served with the Royal Naval Division during the War, being mentioned in dispatches at Gallipoli, and wounded in France. He is author of "Laughing Ann," "Misleading Cases," "The Water Gipsies," "Tantivy Towers," "Holy Deadlock," and many other works. He is responsible for introducing into Parliament the Bill which reformed the Divorce Laws.
- P. 57, l. 14. *The Purser* . the officer in charge of all financial affairs in connection with passengers on a liner.
1. 25. *General Franco* : commanding the nationalist troops in the Spanish Civil War.
- P. 59, l. 6. *Mr. Eden* : Mr. Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary in 1937.
- The Verger*. From "Cosmopolitans," by W. Somerset Maugham.

William Somerset Maugham is famous for his many successful plays, which include "The Circle," "Our Betters," and "For Services Rendered"; for his novels, which include "The Moon and Sixpence" and "The Painted Veil"; his short stories, and his striking autobiography "The Summing Up." His

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

work is equally popular both with students of literature and with the general reading public.

The Education Act in England, making school attendance compulsory, was only passed in 1870. Therefore if Albert Edward Foreman was over fourteen in 1870 he might never have attended school.

- P. 70, ll. 16-17. *To render unto Caesar what was Caesar's* : St. Matthew xxii. 21.

The High Lama. From "Lost Horizon," by James Hilton. James Hilton, educated at Leys School and Cambridge, is author, among other works, of "Goodbye, Mr Chips," a charming and very popular study of an old-fashioned schoolmaster. "Lost Horizon," awarded the Hawthornden Prize in 1934, has been successfully filmed with Ronald Colman in the part of Conway.

- P. 72, l. 12. *Lama* : a Tibetan high priest.
l. 19. *Cadenza* : a conventional passage in music marking the end of a piece or of a section of a piece (Italian).
l. 27. *Lamasery* the abode of the lama.
l. 32. *Chopin* : (1810-1849), the famous Polish composer of piano music.
P. 73, l. 4. *Mozart*. (1756-1791), the famous Austrian composer.
P. 80, l. 18. *Perrault* : a fictitious character, not the French author.
ll. 29-30. *The Grand Monarque* : the French King, Louis XIV (1638-1715).
P. 81, l. 3. *Livy* : Titus Livius, the Latin author (59 B.C. to A.D. 17). He wrote a history of Rome in 142 books, but only 35 of them are extant.
ll. 4-5. *The Summer Palace in Peking* : during the so-called Boxer rising in 1900 the legations of the European powers in Peking were besieged. When they were relieved by British troops, there was a good deal of looting, and many English houses still contain treasures bought from soldiers who had looted them from the Summer Palace and elsewhere.

Orpheus and his Lute. From "Bones of Contention," by Frank O'Connor.

Frank O'Connor was born in Cork in 1903. He has made a considerable study of the Gaelic language and literature. During the Irish Civil War he was im-

NOTES

prisoned by the Free State Government. He has contributed poetry and prose to "The Irish Statesman."

- P. 82, l. 4. *Du holde Kunst* : German "thou lovely Art."
 P. 84, l. 33. *Sister Anne* : In the old fairy-story of Bluebeard, Sister Anne is the sister of Bluebeard's wife ; she goes to the top of the tower to watch for the coming of her brothers, who are to save Fatima from Bluebeard's vengeance.
 P. 85, l. 22. *Butt* : a heavy two-wheeled tip-cart.
 P. 87, l. 28. *Half-tierces* : small casks.
 P. 89, l. 21. *Patrick's Day* : St. Patrick's day is March 17th, a great festival in Ireland.
 l. 22. *The scour* : noun coined from the verb "to scour," i.e. to search.
 l. 35. *Lutheran* : a Protestant.
 P. 91, l. 23. *Brian Boru* : (926-1014), King of Munster, and later chief king of Ireland. Famous for his wars with the Danes.
 l. 24. *Mother Erin* : a classical figure representing Ireland, as Britannia represents England.
 l. 25. *National Foresters* : members of a club.
 P. 93, l. 24. *Piano* : Italian, "soft," a common musical term.
 l. 31. *Pianissimo* : very soft.
 P. 94, l. 34. *Sodality* : a fellowship.

Greater London. From "They Walk in the City," by J. B. Priestley.

- J. B. Priestley, 1894, novelist, essayist, and dramatist, was born at Bradford and was educated at Bradford and Cambridge. During the War he served with the Duke of Wellington's and Devon regiments. He has written critical studies of Peacock and George Meredith, has written a number of successful plays, including "Laburnum Grove" and "Time and the Conways," and by the publication of "The Good Companions," "Angel Pavement," "Faraway," and "They Walk in the City," has established himself as one of the most popular and successful present-day novelists, and one whose work lays claim to be considered as permanent literature.
- P. 95, l. 26. *Betelgeuse* : the brightest star in the constellation Orion.
 ll 27-28 *City of the Golden Gates · Atlantis* : Atlantis was a legendary land believed to have existed somewhere

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

in the Atlantic, and to have sunk under the sea. Whether there was ever any truth in the legend is unknown, but it was believed from ancient Egyptian days down to medieval times.

- P. 97, l. 9. These chemicals are used in the manufacture of cheap and attractive, but not always very nourishing or wholesome foodstuffs, as follows :

Citric acid : used in making lime juice and effervescing drinks.

- l. 10. *Tartaric acid* : used in baking-powder and in making sherbet.

Cotton-seed oil : an ingredient of margarine.

Sulphur dioxide : a sulphuric gas used in refrigerating machines.

- l. 11. *Sodium sulphate* : Glauber's salt, contained in many mineral waters.

Potassium bromate : used in medicine as a sedative.

- ll 11-12 *Manganese, copper, lead* : small quantities of these metals are no doubt absorbed from the aluminium, copper, and iron cooking-utensils, and from the so-called "tins" in which many foodstuffs are preserved.

- l. 12. *Arsenic* . a poisonous substance often present in metal alloys, and therefore possibly present in foodstuffs preserved in metal containers ; it is also used in very small quantities for preserving fruit, which is to be packed and shipped for long distances, from the attacks of insects

- l. 21. *Arcadian* : Arcadia was an imaginary country in which an idyllic country life was lived

A Gangster's Funeral. From "Juan in America," by Eric Linklater.

Eric Linklater, born 1899, is a native of Orkney, where he resides. He served during the War as a private in the Black Watch, and at one time studied medicine. He has been assistant editor to "The Times of India" in Bombay, assistant to the Professor of English Literature in Aberdeen, and Commonwealth Fellow in the United States of America. His works include "Poet's Pub," "Juan in America," "Magnus Merriman."

Juan is supposed to be the son of an English father and an American mother, both of whom are descended from the same remote Spanish ancestor. He has been sent to America to complete his education.

- P. 99, l. 34. *Mr. Gehenna* : Red-Eye Rod Gehenna, leader

NOTES

of the gangsters. Juan had seen him with his confederates on the boat coming over from Europe, and was anxious to keep in touch with him, because he wanted to make the acquaintance of a girl who had been with Red-Eye on the boat. Red-Eye had an injured eye which earned him his nickname.

1. 37. *Evviva* : Italian—"long live."
- P. 100, l. 20. *Wonny the Weeper* : one of Red-Eye's lieutenants.
- P. 101, l. 29. *Cola Coloni* : Cola Coloni had been the chauffeur of Red-Eye's armoured car ; he had been shot by rival gangsters, and Red-Eye had come to Chicago on purpose to attend his funeral.
1. 31. *Bucks* : a slang term for "dollars."
- P. 103, ll. 7-8. *Rigoletto Funeral Parlor* : presumably an establishment from which funerals were conducted for people who had no suitable private address for the purpose. Coloni had been an Italian, and therefore the whole affair took place in the Italian quarter of the town.
- P. 104, l. 24. *Argot* : slang, or dialect.
1. 25. *Gullah* . a language spoken by some of the West African negroes in America, descended from the Gullah tribe who were brought there from Africa in the eighteenth century.
Yiddish : a language used by the Jews, partly of German origin.
- P. 107, l. 17. *Juggernaut* : a name for the Indian god Vishnu ; the famous ceremony in which Juggernaut's car was dragged from his temple to his country-house through soft sand during the rainy season, accompanied by hundreds of pilgrims, has led to the name "juggernaut" being applied to a car which forces its way through a crowd. There is a legend that pilgrims used deliberately to allow themselves to be crushed under the wheels, but this was rare, and usually accidental.
1. 18. *Laramie and Las Vegas* : Laramie is a town in Wyoming and Las Vegas in New Mexico ; there is therefore the whole State of Colorado between them.

The Tunnel From "The Fountain," by Charles Morgan.

Charles Langbridge Morgan, novelist and chief dramatic critic of "The Times," is author of "Portrait in a Mirror," awarded the Femina-Vie Heureuse Prize in

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

1930 ; "The Fountain," awarded the Hawthornden Prize for 1933, and "Sparkenbroke." He has also written the successful play "The Flashing Stream."

The scene of "The Fountain" is laid in Holland in the spring of 1915. This chapter depicts a fortress where English officers, who have for various reasons got across the frontier from the war-zone into Holland, are interned by the Dutch authorities. Ballater and Lewis Alison are British officers. The Baron and Baroness van Leyden are Dutch people, but the Baroness has previously been married to an Englishman, and has known Lewis Alison slightly many years before in England ; for this reason they are visiting him in the internment camp, and have been asked to lunch by the Commandant. Lewis was writing a history, and welcomed the inactivity of internment-camp life, for that purpose.

P. 109, l. 22. *Golden oriole* : a bird, bright yellow and black.
 P. 110, l. 5. *Niet Waar ?* : literally "not true ?" meaning "is it not so ?"

l. 14. *Julie* : the Baroness' daughter by her English husband, to whom Lewis had acted as tutor for a short time.

l. 27. *Mrs. Quillan* : the Baroness van Leyden's former name.

ll. 32-33. *Madame de Narwitz* : Julie's married name : her husband was a Prussian officer.

P. 111, ll. 14-16. *Willett and Herriot* : other British officers who were trying to escape.

P. 112, l. 2. *Resignations of Fisher and Churchill* : Lord Fisher, First Sea Lord, and Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, disagreed during the Great War over Churchill's plan to force the Dardanelles.

P. 117, l. 8. *Aguecheek* : the foolish knight, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night."

P. 119, l. 27. *Willett* : Willett in civilian life was a show-man of the "strong man" variety.

l. 33. *Ja, Ja* : "Yes, yes."

P. 120, l. 30. *Vive les Pays-Bas !* : "Long live the Low Countries," i.e. Holland.

P. 123, l. 30. *Double-bottoms of a cruiser* : Ballater was a naval officer, and is presumably referring to the technical name for the lower part of the ship.

P. 128, l. 15. *Ja, Mynheer* : "Yes, Sir."

Example of Modern Science. By E. M. Delafield.

NOTES

Miss E. M. Delafield, the *nom de plume* of Elizabeth M. Dashwood, J.P., is famous for her novels, which include "The Heel of Achilles," "The Diary of a Provincial Lady," and its sequel "A Provincial Lady Goes Further," "Challenge to Clarissa," and "Nothing is Safe." She wrote a successful play, "To See Ourselves," and contributes regularly to "Punch" over the initials E. M. D.

A Modern Ballad. From "Introduction to Modern Poetry," by Martin Gilkes.

Martin Gilkes, M.C., author and lecturer, has specialised in the interpretation of the modern school of English poetry on which he has thrown considerable light by his two books "Introduction to Modern Poetry," and "A Key to Modern English Poetry."

P. 134, l. 13. *W. H. Auden* : Wystan Hugh Auden, born 1907, writer of poems and plays, including "The Dance of Death" and "The Dog beneath the Skin." Awarded the King's Gold Medal for Poetry in 1936.

l. 19. *The Two Sisters o' Binnourie* : an old Scottish ballad.

l. 20. *Chevy Chase. the Ballad of Chevy Chase* . one of the oldest English ballads, dating from the fifteenth century. It describes the rivalry of the Scottish Douglasses and the English Percies, the Earls of Northumberland, and ends with a fight in which both Percy and Douglas are killed.

l. 21. *Young Lochinvar* : a ballad included in Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion." It tells how Lochinvar carried off his bride in the midst of a ball given in honour of her betrothal to another man of her father's choice.

l. 22. *Lord Ullin's Daughter* : a ballad by Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), the Scottish poet.

P. 136, l. 26. "*I could not love thee, dear, so much*" : lines from "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars," by Colonel Richard Lovelace (1618-1658), a cavalier officer. "Lucasta" was his betrothed, Lucy Sacheverell, but while he was serving with the French King in 1646, Lovelace was falsely reported killed, and Lucasta married another man.

ll. 34-35. "*I don't want to leave you, but I feel I ought to go*" : an adaptation of a popular recruiting song of the Great War, of which the chorus began "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go."

P. 140, ll. 31-32. "*The baseless fabric of this vision*" : this

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

and the following quotation are lines spoken by Prospero in Shakespeare's "Tempest."

Caesar's Death. From "Julius Caesar," by John Buchan.

John Buchan, now Lord Tweedsmuir, G.C.M.G., C.H., author, soldier, and statesman, is famous both for his long series of delightful and popular novels, historical studies, and biographies, and in his capacity as Governor-General to the Dominion of Canada. He was elevated to the peerage as Lord Tweedsmuir in 1937.

P. 141, l. 4. *The 19th of March 44 : i.e. 44 B.C.*

1. 5. *The Ides* : the Ides in the Roman Calendar was the 15th day of March, May, July, and October, and the 13th of all the other months.

1. 9. *Lupercalia* : the festival of Lupercus, the wolf-god, connected with the legend of Romulus and Remus being nursed by a she-wolf.

1. 10. *Antony* : Mark Antony, one of Caesar's greatest friends and supporters.

11. 20-22—P. 142, ll. 17-30. *Cassius, Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Casca, Trebonius* : conspirators against Caesar's life ; some were disgruntled and jealous, others honestly believed that they were doing a great service to the State in ridding it of a tyrant. Marcus Brutus was one of Caesar's dearest friends, and killed him from the highest motives.

P. 141, l. 21. *Lepidus* : another close ally of Caesar.

1. 23. *Cicero* : (106-43 B.C.), the great Roman orator and statesman. He was born in 106 B.C. and would therefore have been sixty-two at the time of the murder of Caesar. He died in the following year.

1. 30. *Field of Mars* : Mars was the Roman god of war.

P. 142, l. 7. *Pompey* : (106-48 B.C.), the famous Roman General, who had been in turn both an ally and a bitter rival of Caesar.

Curia : the place where the meetings of the Senate were held.

1. 8. *Gladiators* : hired or slave fighters whose feats of arms made up the gladiatorial shows in the Roman theatre, which was a large open arena or stadium.

1. 29. *Toga* : a long draped robe, worn by the Romans.

P. 143, l. 19. *Capitol* : the central fortress of the city, on the top of one of the seven hills.

1. 25. *Forum* : the Roman Parliament building.
1. 35. *Palatine* : one of the seven hills on which Rome was built.

New Ways of Collecting Stamps. From "Stamp Collecting," by Stanley Phillips.

Stanley Phillips is Editor of Stanley Gibbons' Postage Stamp Catalogues and Gibbons' Stamp Monthly Magazine. He is a well-known writer on philately; his works include "Stamp Collecting and How to Enjoy It," "The Beginner's Book of Stamp Collecting," and, in conjunction with C. P. Rang, "How to Arrange and Write up a Stamp Collection."

- P. 145, ll. 10-11. *Romulus and Remus* : the twin brothers who founded Ancient Rome.
1. 11. *Julius Caesar and Augustus* : the famous Roman General, and his nephew the first Roman Emperor.
- ll. 12-13. *Rameses, Cleopatra, and the builders of her ancient pyramids* : Rameses was one of the most famous of the Pharaohs; Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt at the time of Caesar Augustus; the pyramids, or tombs, and the temples were built by succeeding dynasties of Pharaohs.
1. 13. *Darius* : the King of Persia who carried the Israelites into captivity.
1. 14. *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* : the Queen of Sheba, who paid a state visit to Solomon, King of Israel, was said to come from what is now Abyssinia.
- P. 147, l. 29 *Coracle* : a small native boat, made of skins, stretched over a framework.
- ll. 36-37. *Santos Dumont* : Alberto Santos Dumont, a Brazilian, living in France, who began experiments with balloons in 1898, the same year as the German Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin.
1. 37. *Graf Zeppelin* : a famous German airship, called after its inventor.
- P. 148, l. 13 *Kraal* : a native village or group of huts (South Africa).
1. 17. *Goethals* : George Washington Goethals, an American soldier and engineer, was born in 1858.
1. 29. *Columbus* : Christopher Columbus, the Italian sailor who discovered America.
- P. 149, ll. 34-35. *Captain Cook* : Captain James Cook, the English navigator (1728-1779).
1. 36. *Pizarro* : Francisco Pizarro (1471 or 1475-1541), the Spanish conqueror of Peru.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

Balboa : Vasco Nunez de Balboa (1475-1517), Spanish discoverer of the Pacific Ocean.

Magellan : (1480?-1521), the Portuguese navigator after whom the Straits of Magellan are named.

Cabot : John and Sebastian Cabot, father and son, were English navigators of Venetian origin, who made a number of voyages of discovery between 1450 and 1550.

La Pérouse : (1741-1788?), a French Count who was also a navigator and lost his life in a shipwreck.

P. 150, l. 6. *Grant* : (1809-1877), Ulysses Simpson Grant was the eighteenth President of the United States.

l. 7. *Nelson* : Horatio, Lord Nelson (1758-1805), killed at the Battle of Trafalgar.

l. 8. *Cochrane* : Thomas Cochrane, Earl of Dundonald (1775-1860).

l. 10. *Codrington* : Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Codrington (1770-1851).

l. 11. *Navarino* : the Battle of Navarino, October 20, 1827. A naval battle, fought in the harbour at Navarino in Greece, between a combined fleet of English, French, and Russian ships, against the Egyptians and Turks, who had refused to observe the armistice in their war with the Greeks. The allies, supporting the Greeks, were victorious.

l. 12. *Farragut* : David Glasgow Farragut (1801-1870).

l. 36. *Dante* : (1265-1321), Dante Alighieri, the famous Italian poet.

l. 37. *Manzoni* : Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873), Italian novelist and poet.

P. 151, l. 2. *St. Paul* : shipwrecked on the Island of Malta in the early years of the Christian era.

l. 3. *Ronsard* : (1524-1585), Pierre de Ronsard wrote famous lyrics.

l. 4. *Goethe* : (1749-1832), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the greatest of German poets and philosophers.

Cervantes : (1547-1616), Miguel de Cervantes, author of "Don Quixote."

Petőfi : (1823-1849), Sandor Petőfi was a lyric poet and a patriot. He was killed in battle, after a wandering and difficult life, at the age of twenty-six.

ll. 4-5. *Maurus Jokai* : (1825-1904), novelist and dramatist.

l. 5. *Ibsen* : (1828-1906), Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian dramatist, called the "father of the modern drama."

NOTES

Hans Andersen : (1805-1875), Hans Christian Andersen, the well-known writer of fairy-stories

1. 6. *D'Annunzio* : Gabriele D'Annunzio, born 1864, was an Italian poet who fought for Italy successively in the army, navy, and air force during the Great War, and afterwards made himself ruler of the town of Fiume, which he held for fifteen months against all Europe.

Camoens · Luiz Camoens (1524-1580), a Portuguese poet.

1. 7. *Sienkiewicz* : Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), Polish novelist.

Quo Vadis? : "Whither goest thou?"; a novel describing Roman life under the Emperor Nero, which was translated into many languages and also dramatised and filmed.

11. 7-8. *Robert Louis Stevenson* : (1850-1894), the famous writer spent the latter years of his life in the island of Samoa.

11. 12-13. *Don Quixote and Sancho Panza* : in Cervantes' famous romance, the idealistic knight, who tries to carry out the precepts of medieval knighthood in an age when they are no longer fashionable, and his bucolic squire.

1. 16. *I Promessi Sposi* : the Betrothed.

1. 17. *Vazoff* · Ivan Vazoff (1850-1921), Bulgarian poet and novelist

1. 20. *King James I* : (reigned in England 1603-1625). The first settlements of British planters and fishermen were made in Newfoundland in the reign of James I

1. 21. *Francis Bacon*. (1561-1626), the famous Elizabethan writer and statesman

11. 21-22. *The Cabot series of Newfoundland* : John Cabot discovered Newfoundland in 1497.

1. 22. "*Carmen Sylva*". the pen-name of Queen Elizabeth of Rumania (1843-1916).

1. 23. *Queen Marie* · Queen Marie of Rumania, (1875-1938), was a daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria. She wrote a number of books.

1. 36. *Michelangelo* : Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), one of the greatest of Italian painters and sculptors.

1. 37. *Raphael* · Raffaello Sanzio, one of the greatest of the Italian painters (1483-1520). His famous Madonna, painted for the Sistine Chapel in Rome, now hangs in the picture-gallery in Dresden.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

- P. 152, l. 1. *Rembrandt* : Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), Dutch painter.
- l. 4. *Raemaekers* : Louis Raemaekers, born 1869, was well known during the Great War for his anti-German cartoons, although he belonged to neutral Holland.
- l. 10 *Praxiteles* : a Greek sculptor believed to have lived about 340 B.C.
- l. 11. *Peonias* . or Paeonius, famous for his sculptures at Olympia, about 436 B.C.
- l. 14. *Ju-jus* : West African images representing gods or spirits ; a corruption of the French word "jou-jou," a toy.
- l. 22. *Haydn* : (1732-1809), Joseph Haydn, German composer.
- l. 23. *Beethoven* : (1770-1827), Ludwig van Beethoven, German composer
- Schubert* . (1797-1828), Franz Schubert, Austrian composer.
- Bruckner* : (1824-1896), Anton Bruckner, Austrian composer.
- Strauss* : Richard Strauss, the Austrian composer, was born in 1864.
- l. 24 *Hugo Wolf* : (1860-1903), German composer, famous chiefly for his songs.
- Bach* : (1685-1750), Johann Sebastian Bach, the greatest of the German composers.
- Wagner* : (1813-1883), Richard Wagner, the greatest German composer of opera.
- l. 25. *Paderewski* : Ignaz Jan Paderewski was born in 1860. He is a pre-eminent pianist, a composer, and is also a statesman. He worked hard for the independence of Poland throughout the Great War, and became the first Prime Minister of Poland in 1919
- l. 27. *Dvořák* : (1841-1903), Anton Dvořák, native of Bohemia, now called Czecho-Slovakia.
- l. 28. *Smetana* : (1824-1884), Friedrich Smetana, Czech composer and pianist.
- l. 34. *Copernicus* . (1473-1543), Nikolaus Copernicus, Polish or Prussian astronomer.
- l. 35. *Volta* : (1745-1827), Count Alessandro Volta, an Italian physicist.
- l. 36. *Galvani* : (1737-1788), Luigi Galvani, the Italian discoverer of galvanism.
- Pasteur* . (1822-1895), Louis Pasteur, the great French chemist, inventor of "pasteurisation."

NOTES

1. 36. *Berthelot*: (1827-1907), Pierre Eugène Marcellin Berthelot, French chemist.
- P. 153, ll. 4-5. *Fulton's early steamboat*, "the *Clermont*": Fulton (Robert Fulton, 1765-1815), was an American engineer who invented the first boat propelled by steam, in 1807, which plied on the Hudson river, between New York and Albany.
1. 5. *Edison* - Thomas Alva Edison, the famous American inventor, was born in 1847.
1. 27. *St. Francis*: St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). The Italian founder of the Franciscan order of monks.
St. Anthony: Saint Anthony was born in Egypt and lived in the third and fourth centuries. He founded the monastic system.
1. 28. *St. Benedict* - (about 480-544), the famous Italian monk who founded the Benedictine order.
1. 30. *Holy Year*. a Roman Catholic festival.
1. 34. *St. Publius*: Acts xxviii. "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously"
- P. 154, l. 2. *St. Barnabas*: St. Barnabas lived in the first century A.D. and was the companion of St. Paul on some of his missionary journeys. Both the date and manner of his death are uncertain.
- ll. 34-35. *The "Victory" of Samothrace*: a famous Greek statue, much mutilated, dating from the fourth century B.C.; it was found in the island of Samothrace, and is now in the Louvre Museum in Paris.
- P. 155, l. 8. *Caribou*. a species of reindeer.
Ptarmigan: a kind of grouse.
- Penguins*. From "The Polar Regions," by Frank Debenham.
 Frank Debenham is Director of the Polar Research Institute in the University of Cambridge.
- P. 155, l. 22. *The great auk*: there are still auks among the sea-birds of the far North, but the particular species known as the great auk had, like the penguin, lost the power of flight, and was finally exterminated by sailors about 1844.
- P. 156, l. 28. *The sea-leopard*: a very large seal, sometimes as much as twelve feet in length. The remains of seventeen penguins were found in one sea-leopard killed by a scientist in the Antarctic.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

- P. 157, l. 14. *Larrikin* : a rough, rowdy street loafer.
 P. 159, l. 2 *Skua* . a kind of gull.
 l. 36. *Bay ice* : new ice, formed in the shelter of a bay.
 P. 161, l. 3. *Dr. Wilson* : Dr E. A. Wilson sailed with Captain Scott on his last expedition in search of the South Pole. Wilson, with two companions made a remarkable winter journey to Cape Crozier, to study the habits of the emperor penguins. The expedition took place in 1910-1912, Scott and his companions in the Pole party losing their lives in a blizzard on the return journey, February-March 1912.

Sir Walter Scott. From "Speeches of Lord Birkenhead."

- Lord Birkenhead (1872-1930), F. E. Smith, created the 1st Earl of Birkenhead in 1922, as lawyer, orator, and statesman had one of the most distinguished careers of his generation. He championed Ulster as Unionist M.P. (1906-1919), was Solicitor-General (1915), Attorney-General, Lord Chancellor (1919-1922), and Secretary for India (1924-1928). The luminous lucidity and nervous vigour of his style have been compared with that of Lord Macaulay.
- P. 162, l. 1. *My Lord Provost* : the principal magistrate of the Royal Burgh of Edinburgh.
 l. 28. *Dr. Johnson*. (1709-1784), the famous writer, talker, and lexicographer.
- P. 163, ll 3-4. *Sir Walter Scott* : the famous novelist and poet lived from 1771 to 1832.
- P. 164, l. 15. *The Younger Pitt* : William Pitt (1759-1806) was in Parliament before he was twenty-two, and Prime Minister at twenty-four. He led the country during very difficult times - he died before he was forty-seven, having been delicate from childhood.
- l. 25. *François Villon* : French poet (1431-1463). He was involved in many brawls and robberies, and was several times banished and imprisoned.
- ll. 25-26. *Benvenuto Cellini* : (1500-1571), Italian artist. He took part in many brawls and also, in a more honourable way in smaller Italian wars, and was periodically exiled or had to fly for his life
- l. 26 *Byron* : George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), English poet. He led a roving unsettled life and died in Greece, fighting for the Greeks against the Turks.
- Oscar Wilde* : (1856-1900), Irish author and playwright.

NOTES

These four men are taken as examples of artists who have been more worthy in their art than in their private life

- P. 165, ll. 24-25. *Depressing physical ailments* : he was lame.
1. 28. *Derring do* : originally meant "daring to do" but has come to be used for "feats of daring."
1. 30. *Wolfe* the British General who took Quebec (Canada) from the French in 1759.
1. 35. *Gray's "Elegy"* : "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," by Thomas Gray (1716-1771)
- P. 166, l. 12. *Sheriff* : an administrative and judicial official, of the nature of chief magistrate of the county. The Clerk of the Court no doubt refers to the Sheriff's Court.
1. 19. *Douce* : Scots dialect : sedate.
- P. 167, l. 17. *Coniston* : a lake in Lancashire, close to Ruskin's home.
- P. 168, l. 4. *Dourness* : Scots dialect : boldness.
1. 32. *Hugo* Victor Hugo (1802-1885), author of "Notre Dame de Paris," "Les Misérables," etc.
Balzac : 1799-1850.
Dumas : Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870), author of "The Three Musketeers," "The Count of Monte Cristo," etc
1. 33. *Zola* : Émile Zola (1840-1902), the French novelist who championed the cause of the wrongly imprisoned Dreyfus in the famous spy case.
- P. 169, l. 11. *Lockhart* : John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854), married Sir Walter Scott's eldest daughter, Sophia, in April 1820. His biography of Scott was first published in seven volumes, and the second edition was in ten volumes. Birkenhead calls him the "second greatest biographer," no doubt thinking of Boswell, whose "Life of Dr. Johnson" gives him the first place
- P. 171, l. 32. *Byron* : was said to wake up and find himself famous the day after the publication of his poem "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage."
- P. 172, l. 17. *Pope* : 1688-1744.
Cowper : 1731-1800.
1. 20. *Coleridge* : 1772-1834.
- P. 173, l. 14. *William of Deloraine* : in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."
Roderick Dhu : in "The Lady of the Lake."
- ll. 14-15. *The Last Minstrel* : in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

1. 15. *Duchess of Buccleuch* : the Buccleuchs of the ancient times were of Scott's own family and he tells of them in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." The first Duke of Buccleuch was the famous Duke of Monmouth, who was given the title because his wife was heiress to the Earls of Buccleuch.
- P. 174, l. 10. *Battle of Loos* : An early battle on the Western Front in the Great War.
- P. 176, l. 4. *Richardson* : Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), the novelist.
 1. 5. *Clarissa* · "Clarissa Harlowe," one of Richardson's most famous novels.
 1. 6. *Fielding* : Henry Fielding (1707-1754), novelist and dramatist.
 1. 7. *Sterne* : Laurence Sterne (1713-1768), author of "Tristram Shandy," etc.
 1. 31. *Musselburgh* : a town on the shore of the Firth of Forth, near Edinburgh.

Characteristics of Wagner's Music. From "Richard Wagner," by Sir Henry Hadow.

Sir Henry Hadow, C.B.E., Hon D.Mus. Oxford, Hon. LL.D. St. Andrews, was Fellow and Tutor of Worcester College, Oxford, Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle, and Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University. Equally gifted as a writer and lecturer on literature, music, philosophy, and civics, he became highly distinguished both as an author and orator. His published works include two Albums of Songs, "Citizenship," and in the Home University Library, "Music" and "Richard Wagner."

- P. 179, l. 33. *Pomoerum* : literally, in Latin, vacant space outside city walls.
- P. 180, ll. 5-6. *Nomen Latinum* : the Latin name.
 1. 7. *Civitas* : the State.
 1. 29. *Stravinsky* : Igor Fedorovich Stravinsky, a Russian composer, born in 1882
 1. 30. *Oiseau de Feu* : "Fire-Bird," one of Stravinsky's most famous ballets
- P. 181, l. 10 *Gottterdammerung* : "The Twilight of the Gods," the last of the four operas of Wagner which make up the famous cycle known as "The Ring," which deals with Norse mythology
- ll. 15-16. *Sub specie aeternitatis* : in the sight of eternity.

NOTES

1. 21. *Iago*: the villain of Shakespeare's tragedy "Othello."
 1. 22. *Richard III*: in Shakespeare's play of that name.
 1. 33. *Spontini*: (1774-1851), an Italian composer.
 1. 35. *Berlioz*: Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), a French composer.
 - P. 182, l. 8. *Rheingold*: the first of the four operas of "The Ring."
 1. 9. *The Mastersingers' March*: "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg," one of Wagner's most famous operas, describing a musical contest in medieval Germany.
 1. 11. *Parsifal*. the last of Wagner's operas, built up round the legend of the Knights of the Holy Grail.
- The Président de Brosses*. From "Portraits in Miniature," by Lytton Strachey.
- Giles Lytton Strachey, LL D. (1880-1932), was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and made a wide reputation on the publication in 1918 of "Eminent Victorians." Strachey's finest biography is probably his "Queen Victoria." He treats history and biography as material for artistic creation rather than for the purpose of scientific record. He is called cynical by those who do not sufficiently perceive his passion for truth and the strange romantic vein which is mingled with his satire. "Portraits in Miniature" are a series of essays reprinted from "The New Statesman and Nation" and "Life and Letters."
- P. 184, l. 7. *Diderot*: (1713-1784), Denis Diderot, French writer and philosopher.
 1. 17. *Herculaneum*: an Italian city at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, which was entirely overwhelmed by an eruption of the volcano in the year A.D. 79. It was extensively excavated in the eighteenth century, parts of it lying as much as 85 feet below the surface. Many objects of great artistic and antiquarian value were found.
 1. 18. *Histoire des Navigations des Terres Australes*: history of the navigations of the Australasian lands.
 1. 19. *Cook*. Captain James Cook (1728-1779), the English explorer.
Bougainville: Louis Antoine de Bougainville (1729-1811), a French explorer.
 11. 19-20. *Culte des Dieux Fétiches*: worship of the Fetish gods

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

- ll. 21-22. *Traité de la formation mécanique des langues* : treatise on the mechanical formation of languages
- l. 24. *Sallust* : Caius Sallustius Crispus (86-34 B.C.), a Roman historian who accompanied Caesar in his African war.
- l. 32. *Montesquieu* : Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu (1689-1755), a famous French writer and satirist, who was a "Président" in the parliament of Bordeaux.
- P. 185, ll. 6-7. *The Academy* : the *Académie Française*, to which French literary men of high standing were elected.
- ll. 9-10. *The glorious forty* : the number of members of the academy was limited to forty.
- l. 18. *Voltaire* : François Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1794-1778), the great French writer and philosopher. He lived for some time in Prussia as the intimate friend of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, 1740-1786, but his many jealousies, his Bohemian scrapes, and his audacious political lampoons, continually got him into trouble, and he left Prussia under a cloud in 1753.
- P. 187, l. 15. *Rousseau* : (1712-1778), Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the French philosopher.
Fréron : (1718-1776), Élie Catherine Fréron, French critic.
- l. 18. *Peter the Great* : (1672-1725), Emperor of Russia.
- l. 19. *Corneille* : (1606-1684), the French dramatist.
- ll. 31-33. "*Agréez, Monsieur . . .*": "May I ask you, sir, for an explanation of a very curious thing"
- P. 188, ll. 3-13 "*Je vous demande . . .*". "I must ask you to forgive me for repeating such a suggestion to you : for you will believe that I am very far from thinking that you ever had anything to do with it, and I myself do not believe in it at all. I merely take it as the word of a country bumpkin who has no knowledge of the ways of the world or of polite society, who does not know that, although one may send one's friend or one's neighbour a basket of peaches, one would not compliment him with the gift of fourteen loads of wood ; he would regard such a gift as ridiculous and out of taste."
- ll. 22-28. "*J'espère . . .*": "I hope you will settle this trifling bill with Charlot at once ; because, as I shall certainly make him pay me, he will be bound to

NOTES

insist on payment from you ; and a man like you would not wish to be mixed up in an affair of that kind."

P. 189, l. 12. *Lapsus linguae* . a slip of the tongue.

ll. 31-37—P. 190, ll. 1-2. "*Le Fétiche* . . ." : "the fetish wants money for his loads of wood, for his faggots. The wretch is trying to exploit me. . . . To think that he was playing this trick on me at the time when I was paying him forty-seven thousand pounds! Let him shake in his shoes! I won't ridicule him: I'll shame him! It distresses me, but I'll make him pay dearly for this wrongful and cowardly lawsuit."

P. 190, ll. 4-7. "*Vous n'êtes donc venu* . . ." : "So you only came to me, sir, and offered me your friendship, to poison the end of my life with lawsuits"

ll. 14-18. "*S'il faut que* . . ." : "If I have to tell the Chancellor and the Ministers, and all Paris about this lawsuit, I'll tell them; and if in your respectable company there's one single person who approves of you, I'll be damned"

ll. 32-37—P. 191, ll. 1-2. "*Là-dessus on dit* . . ." : "On the top of everything they tell me he's a dangerous man. And am I therefore to let him go on in his wickedness with impunity? On the contrary, those are the sort of people who ought to be punished. I'm not afraid of him . . . People admire him because he writes good verses: I daresay they are good, but it is the verses they ought to admire."

P. 191, ll. 11-17. "*Je soussigne* . . ." : "I the undersigned, François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire, Lord of Ferney, gentleman-in-ordinary of the Bedchamber to the King, admit that M. de Brosses, President of the Parliament, has made me a present of . . . loads of wood for heating, to the value of 281 francs, for which I thank him"

ll. 20-23. "*Un homme si riche* . . ." : "Such a rich and famous man making such an excessive fuss about paying a peasant 280 francs for supplying him with firewood."

ll. 24-28. "*En vérité* . . ." : "Really it makes one sigh for humanity to see so great a genius with so small a heart, tormented incessantly with the miseries of jealousy and selfishness. You are poisoning your own life, which could so easily be so happy."

ll. 30-36. "*Il ne convient pas* . . ." : "It is most unsuitable to talk like that: have the wisdom in future

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

not to say such things to a magistrate. Let me tell you not to write to me again, either on this matter or in this tone. I will wish you, sir, the old wish of Perseus: A sound mind in a sound body."

P. 192, ll. 11-15. "*Je ne crains point . . .*": "I'm not afraid of Fetishes, but Fetishes had better be afraid of me. There's only one thing to be said about the Fetish."

ll. 34-35 "*Ce plat Président . . .*" this obtuse President.

l. 37. *Maréchal de Richelieu*: not to be confused with the famous Cardinal of the same name, who had died in 1642.

P. 193, ll. 9-10. "*Ce petit persécuteur nasillonneur*": "this little husky pest."

Lawrence of Arabia. From "Great Contemporaries," by Winston Churchill.

The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, P.C., C.H., statesman, orator, and author, served as First Lord of the Admiralty (1911-1915), Secretary of State for War (1918-1921), and Chancellor of the Exchequer (1924-1929). His history of the War, entitled "The World Crisis," is the most brilliant and readable of all records of the War, and his elaborate biography of his ancestor, the First Duke of Marlborough, is certain of a place among classic biographies. It is a testimony to Mr. Churchill's inexhaustible energy that he has been able to write so much and so well during an exceedingly active political career.

Thomas Edward Lawrence led the Arabs in their revolt against the Turks during the Great War. His book, "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," describes his experiences, and was later republished in an abridged edition under the title "Revolt in the Desert." He was killed in a bicycle accident in England in 1934.

Einstein. From "The Harvest of Victory," by Esmé Wingfield-Stratford.

Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, D.Sc., F.R.Hist.Soc., was educated at Eton, and King's College, Cambridge, of which he is now a Fellow. He served during the War in the Kent Regiment. In addition to "The Harvest of Victory" he has published "The History of British Civilisation," "The Victorian Tragedy, Sunset, and Aftermath" (a trilogy), "They That Take the Sword," and "New Minds for Old." As a writer he is dis-

NOTES

tinguished for the pungency and irony of his style in which he expresses a lofty, sensitive, and ironical conception of history.

- P. 197, l. 15. *Darwin* : Charles Darwin, the nineteenth-century discoverer of the evolution of man from the animal kingdom
- l. 22. *Newton* Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the discoverer of the law of gravity.
- P. 198, l. 6. *St. Patrick* : (about A.D. 389 to 461), the patron Saint of Ireland, was trained in the Christian faith in England and France. Having spent part of his youth in Ireland, whither he had been carried off as a slave, he determined to go back there and convert the Irish to Christianity. Loigaire was the High-King of that part of Ulster where Patrick settled, and was still a heathen. Patrick challenged his authority by lighting a Paschal fire on Easter Eve on the Hill of Slane. It happened to be a Druid festival, when no fire might be lit before the royal fire, and the result of Patrick's action was that a number of contests were arranged between him and the Druids. Ultimately the King granted protection to St. Patrick.
- l. 30. *Bedlam* : originally Bethlehem Hospital, in London, the first English lunatic asylum, dating back to the Middle Ages.
- ll. 31-32. *Right little, tight little* : the phrase is borrowed from a poem called "The Snug Little Island," by Thomas Dibdin (1771-1841), in which the lines occur :
 "O, it's a snug little Island !
 A right little, tight little Island !"
 the reference in that case being to Britain.
- P. 199, l. 16 *Greek Calends* : an expression meaning "never" : the Greeks had no Calends, which were a Roman method of calculating the date.
- l. 22 *Job* . a book of the Old Testament, in which every conceivable misfortune is heaped upon Job.
- l. 31. *Bergson* : Henri Bergson, born in 1859, in Paris, of Anglo-Jewish parents ; his philosophy concerned the permanence of the individual.
- P. 200, l. 1. *Habbakuk* : one of the minor prophets of the Old Testament.
- Capables de tout* : "capable of everything."
- l. 9. *Mr. Dunne* : Mr. John William Dunne, author of "An Experiment with Time" and "The Serial Universe."

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. *Birth of a Cloud.* Consider the possibilities afforded by the aeroplane of appreciating the beauties and grandeur of scenery *in* the sky and *from* the sky.

2. *Men and the Mountain.* Discuss the fascination of mountain-climbing and the factors which make men risk their lives to attain the summits.

3. *The Country.* Give your views on the effect of modern transport on the respective conditions of town and country.

4. *A Motor Drive in the U.S.A.* In what respects do you notice any difference between American and English motor manners from reading this extract?

5. *Moscow.* What special characteristics of post-War Russian life are to be observed in this passage?

6. *At a Spanish Parador.* What features of the Spanish temperament does this extract illustrate?

7. *On the Mystical Nature of the Passport.* Write an essay in a similar vein entitled "On the Mystical Nature of the Birth Certificate."

8. *The Verger.* Write a critique of this story pointing out any improbable features in it which strike you.

9. *The High Lama.* Consider how far the High Lama's ideals are practicable in the world as we know it.

10. *Orpheus and His Lute.* What do you learn of Eire from this episode?

11. *Greater London.* Estimate from this passage the change which has come over London since Dickens described it

12. *A Gangster's Funeral.* What elements in this episode attract you towards visiting America, or repel you?

13. *The Tunnel.* Consider what features of style, description, and characterisation in this extract have given the author a claim to high rank as a novelist.

14. *Example of Modern Science.* Describe this incident from the point of view of one of the girls of St. Primrose in the audience.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

15. *A Modern Ballad*. Say what Auden's Ballad conveys to you.

16. *Caesar's Death*. Compare Buchan's description of Caesar's death with that by Shakespeare.

17. *New Ways of Collecting Stamps*. If you are, or were, a stamp collector, say what particular line of collecting you follow, or would like to follow, giving your reasons why certain stamps appeal to you.

18. *Penguins*. "There is nothing so peculiar as a penguin": consider the truth of Walt Disney's song in the light of this passage.

19. *Sir Walter Scott*. What characteristics of the orator as distinct from the writer do you notice in this speech?

20. *Characteristics of Wagner's Music*. In what respects, in addition to its intrinsic greatness, was the music of Wagner epoch-making?

21. *The Président de Brosses*. Write a character-sketch of Voltaire as seen through the eyes of the Président de Brosses.

22. *Lawrence of Arabia*. Discuss the nature of genius with reference to Lawrence of Arabia.

23. *Einstein*. "Einstein is a man who has proved not only that things are not what they seem, but that they aren't even what they are"—opening of a schoolboy's essay. Consider this verdict.

THE SCHOLAR'S LIBRARY

Complete Texts

- ESSAYS IN CRITICISM: Second Series. By MATTHEW ARNOLD. Edited by S. R. LITTLEWOOD.
- NORTHANGER ABBEY By JANE AUSTEN. Edited by Mrs. F. S. BOAS.
- A TALE OF TWO CITIES. By CHARLES DICKENS. Introduction by G. K. CHESTERTON. Notes by GUY BOAS.
- SYBIL. By BENJAMIN DISRAELI. Edited by VICTOR COHEN.
- FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD. By THOMAS HARDY. Edited by CYRIL ALDRED.
- THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE. By THOMAS HARDY. Edited by VIVIAN DE SOLA PINTO.
- THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE By THOMAS HARDY. Edited by CYRIL ALDRED. Introduction by SYLVIA LYND.
- THE TRUMPET-MAJOR By THOMAS HARDY. Edited by Mrs. F. S. BOAS.
- UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE. By THOMAS HARDY. Edited by ADRIAN ALINGTON.
- THE WOODLANDERS. By THOMAS HARDY. Edited by CYRIL ALDRED
- EOTHEN. By A. W. KINGLAKE. Edited by GUY BOAS.
- PARADISE LOST Books I. and II By JOHN MILTON. Edited by G. C. IRWIN. Introduction by GUY BOAS.
- PARADISE LOST Books IX and X. By JOHN MILTON. Edited by CYRIL ALDRED.
- SHORTER POEMS By JOHN MILTON. Edited by B. A. WRIGHT.
- TREASURE ISLAND. By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. Edited by Mrs. F. S. BOAS.
- KIDNAPPED. By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. Edited by JAN STRUTHER.
- GULLIVER'S TRAVELS THE FIRST THREE VOYAGES. By JONATHAN SWIFT. Edited by F. E. BUDD

Selections : Prose

- DR. JOHNSON A Selection from Boswell's Biography. Edited by M. ALDERTON PINK
- EIGHT ESSAYISTS Edited by A. S. CAIRNCROSS.
- MODERN ESSAYS IN CRITICISM. Edited by A. S. CAIRNCROSS.
- FACT AND FICTION. An Anthology. Edited by A. S. CAIRNCROSS.
- GREECE AND ROME: A SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIR JAMES GEORGE FRAZER. Edited by S. G. OWEN
- HOMER: THE ILIAD AND THE ODYSSEY. Extracts from the Translations by LANG, LEAF and MYERS, and BUTCHER and LANG. Edited by H. M. KING and H. SPOONER.

MODERN ENGLISH PROSE. First Series Edited by GUY
 BOAS.
 MODERN ENGLISH PROSE Second Series Edited by GUY
 BOAS.
 MODERN SHORT STORIES Edited by A. J. MERSON.
 ONE-ACT PLAYS. Edited by N. B. MCKELLAR.
 THE DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS : SELECTIONS. Edited by
 N. V. MEERES
 PROSE OF YESTERDAY. DICKENS TO GALSWORTHY. Edited
 by GUY BOAS.
 AN ANTHOLOGY OF WIT. Edited by GUY BOAS.
 QUEST AND CONQUEST. An Anthology of Personal Ad-
 ventures. Compiled by E. V. ODLE.
 READINGS FROM THE SCIENTISTS. Edited by EDWARD
 MASON.
 SHORT MODERN PLAYS First Series. Edited by GUY BOAS.
 SHORT MODERN PLAYS Second Series Edited by S. R.
 LITTLEWOOD.
 "THE TIMES" : An Anthology. Edited by M. ALDERTON PINK.
 SHORT STORIES BY OSCAR WILDE. Edited by G. C.
 ANDREWS.
 AMERICAN PROSE. Edited by GUY BOAS.
 AMERICAN ONE ACT PLAYS Selected by J. S. M. THOMSON
 SHORT HISTORICAL PLAYS. By MODERN AUTHORS.
 Edited by E. R. WOOD.
 ENGLISH LIFE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. A
 Prose Anthology Selected by G. A. SAMBROOK
 SELECTIONS FROM THE LETTERS OF HORACE
 WALPOLE. Edited by M. ALDERTON PINK.

Selections · Poetry

MODERN POETRY 1922-1934. An Anthology. Edited by
 MAURICE WOLLMAN.
 POEMS OF TWENTY YEARS An Anthology, 1918-1938
 Edited by MAURICE WOLLMAN
 POEMS OLD AND NEW. An Anthology. Edited by A. S.
 CAIRNCROSS.
 MORE POEMS OLD AND NEW : An Anthology. Edited by
 A. S. CAIRNCROSS.
 LONGER POEMS OLD AND NEW. Edited by A. S.
 CAIRNCROSS
 POEMS FOR YOUTH. Edited by A. S. CAIRNCROSS.
 THE AENEID OF VIRGIL, translated by JOHN DRYDEN.
 Selections, edited by BRUCE PATTISON.

Selections : Prose and Poetry

A "PUNCH" ANTHOLOGY. Edited by GUY BOAS.
 STORIES AND POEMS OF THOMAS HARDY. Edited
 by N. V. MEERES

MACMILLAN & CO., LTD., LONDON

